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THE STASH PROJECT: DAY 2

IN WHICH WE LEARN THAT A CAT CAN HAZ WEB FAME — BUT IT TAKES A LOT OF WORK PAGE 10

Team won't be turning over any new Leafs

But plenty of other teams did make deals, such as trading Martin St. Louis after bitterness in Sochi PAGE 37

Killer in burka and heels gets life in prison

Man pleaded guilty to killing estranged wife two weeks after she asked for a divorce PAGE 3

Threats from gunmen force UN envoy to flee Crimea

Envoy not kidnapped as previously reported PAGE 8

'Working women, working poor'

Job market. Study says women are suffering, being 'de-skilled' by low-paid temp jobs

Viktoria Bitto, seen here at George Brown College on Wednesday, has worked many minimum-wage jobs and is now paying for her education on minimum wage. She says young women are asking for opportunities, not pity. VINCE TALOTTA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Viktoria Bitto just wants a chance.

The young woman is working three part-time jobs to support herself while she studies early childhood education. She fears that even after she graduates, the most she will earn is $12 to $16 an hour.

"Young women aren't asking for pity or handouts. We're asking for an opportunity," said Bitto, 27.

"That is our right, after pursuing education or being in the workforce or completing a trade or becoming an expert ... that we're respected and we're paid fairly for that."

A new report published Thursday gives voice to women like Bitto, who have struggled with a stagnant job market in the GTA. Women at opposite ends of the age spectrum — younger and older — have been hit hardest by the recession, the study suggests.

The report, called Working Women, Working Poor, was produced by several unions. Forty-four women were interviewed about their experiences with layoffs, unemployment or precarious work.

"I think the study raises the larger picture of what is happening to Toronto and Ontario's economy," said lead author Prabha Khosla.

"I see us becoming a low-wage economy. Is that the kind of society we want?"

The younger generation is facing a mountain of student debt and a scarcity of meaningful full-time jobs. Bitto, for example, has $24,000 in student debt and has worked for low wages her entire adult life.

Meanwhile, middle-aged women who were laid off during the recession are now competing for jobs with inexperienced young people who accept lower wages and fewer benefits, the report notes.

"They feel that a younger generation ... can be manipulated more than women who have been on the job for 25 years," said Khosla.

The rise of precarious work has made it increasingly difficult to classify women by their occupation. Women have been forced to seek work in sectors totally new to them.

"A precarious labour market is de-skilling women," the report states.

Pam Sanichar, 58, knows these issues all too well. She was a machine operator for 25 years before being laid off in 2006.

Sanichar was devastated and found herself sobbing every morning as her husband left for work. After her severance and employment insurance dried up, she began applying to temporary agencies.

But she found the agencies only offered three- to six-week work assignments, at between $10.50 and $14 an hour.

Now, Sanichar is unemployed while recovering from tendonitis in her shoulder.

"I feel awful, ridiculous, helpless," she said. "I have 25 years' experience. I've got all my training and I don't see why I can't find a job."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Emotional cost

"It's just been very degrading for a lot of them. It's been humiliating. They're very depressed."

Study's lead author Prabha Khosla

Recommendations

Temp work on the rise

The number of people in the GTA who describe their jobs as temporary increased by 40 per cent between 2007 and 2011. More women than men are likely to be working for minimum wage, and many are likely to be immigrants or visible minorities.

The authors recommend the province raise the minimum wage to $14 an hour and lift barriers to women unionizing.

The report also calls on the province to create a permanent unit to monitor employment standards at temporary agencies. There should be an equal-pay provision for hourly workers performing similar work, regardless of their full-time, part-time or temporary status, it says.

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Enbridge

Decision on pipeline looming

Canada's federal pipeline regulator will release its decision Thursday on whether Enbridge will be allowed to increase and reverse flow in an aging oil pipeline that runs across the GTA.

The National Energy Board is widely expected to approve the controversial project, though it may tack on conditions.

Enbridge applied for approval in November 2012 to increase the permitted flow through Line 9, which runs from Sarnia to Montreal, by 25 per cent, from 240,000 barrels a day to 300,000. The company also wants to reverse the flow from westward to eastward on the section between North Westover, near Hamilton, and Montreal.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Transit

Councillor pitches free TTC rides on coldest nights

The TTC's overnight bus and streetcar service should be free for everyone during extreme cold weather alerts, says a city councillor.

Josh Colle, who is a TTC commissioner, brought a motion forward last week asking the transit provider to study the issue along with Toronto Public Health and the city's shelter, support and housing department.

Extreme cold this winter has forced more people into shelters and more than doubled the number of TTC tokens the city gives out to the homeless.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Somalis split over extra aid for their students

The Toronto District School Board met to debate its budget on Wednesday night. One of the issues dealt with was the Somali task-force report, which drew many members of the Somali community who are fiercely divided on the report's recommendation to offer extra support to Somali students, who have a relatively high dropout rate. Hareda Mohamud, right, was one of many who objected to the report.

KEITH BEATY/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Man who wore burka to kill wife gets life

Sentencing. Abdul Malik Rustam disguised himself to gain access to Shaher Bano Shahdady's apartment

A man who disguised himself in a Muslim woman's garment to strangle his estranged wife was sentenced Wednesday to life in prison with no eligibility for parole for 17 years.

Abdul Malik Rustam, 30, donned a face-covering burka and white wedge heels to get into 21-year-old Shaher Bano Shahdady's Scarborough apartment in July 2011, two weeks after she'd asked for a divorce.

He pleaded guilty to second-degree murder last month.

Points of contention

- The couple, who had drifted apart over the two years it took Rustam to join Shahdady in Canada, argued over Shahdady using her cellphone and over her online friendship with a man in Dubai, according to the agreed statement of facts.
- Her family also didn't want her using a cellphone or the Internet.

Their two-year-old son was left alone in the apartment for 15 hours before Shahdady's body was found on the bathroom floor by her parents, Superior Court Justice John McMahon said.

That Rustam did nothing to alert anyone to check on his son is impossible to fathom and shows "exceptionally callous disregard for that child's wellbeing," McMahon said.

"It's hard to imagine what that child went through," the judge said. "The only glimmer of hope is that he was so young that hopefully it will fade into the child's memory."

Before announcing the sentence, McMahon asked Rustam to stand up, saying: "You took the life of an innocent young woman. You denied your own child the love of his mother."

Shahdady, who came to Canada as a toddler, was 17 when she married Rustam in an arranged marriage in Pakistan, said McMahon.

Soon after her marriage she became pregnant and returned to Canada to give birth to her son, who had serious heart problems and had a heart transplant. Rustam, a Pakistani citizen, joined her two years later and moved in with her family.

Tension escalated when Shahdady applied for social assistance and obtained her own apartment in Scarborough, away from her parents' home. She told Rustam she wanted a divorce and moved to the apartment with her son two weeks before her murder.

Rustam kept coming to visit her and asked to move in with her. She repeatedly refused. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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HUDSON'S BAY

Blair hands oversight of Project Brazen 2 to OPP

Investigation. Mayor Rob Ford is one of many people involved in the police's probe into possible 'criminality'

A fear that the growing personal attacks between Toronto police Chief Bill Blair and the Ford brothers could one day impact court proceedings led to the Ontario Provincial Police taking over the Project Brazen 2 investigation, a source close to the police forces involved told Torstar News Service.

"The Fords have been taking shots at Chief Blair," the source said. "Now Chief Blair has been replaced by OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis and this will avoid all of those problems."

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford addresses media at city hall on Wednesday, after Chief Bill Blair requested oversight by the Ontario Provincial Police in the Project Brazen 2 investigation. STEVE RUSSELL/TORONTO STAR

Personal attacks that reached the media included Ford's reference in a video to Blair as a "C— sucker" and complaints of bias made by Coun. Doug Ford. Hints of the battle have hit the U.S. media, including references to enmity between Blair and Ford raised in the recent appearance by the mayor on Jimmy Kimmel.

At noon Wednesday, the Toronto police announced that the OPP was taking over "oversight" of the probe into possible "criminality" on the part of numerous people, including Ford. In a letter written to OPP Commissioner Lewis, Blair referenced a Tuesday phone call with Lewis, saying: "As discussed in our recent phone call, I am writing to make a formal request that the Ontario Provincial Police assume an oversight role with respect to Project Brazen 2. As you are aware, Project Brazen 2 arose from the Toronto Police Service's yearlong Project Traveller, focusing on organized crime, violence, guns and drugs." Blair said he made the request "to avoid the distractions that have assumed such recent prominence. The only public interest here is the continued investigation, without fear or favour, into evidence of possible criminality." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Same team

A source close to the probe said that Det. Sergeant Gary Giroux will remain as the lead investigator, and his team of a half dozen officers will remain intact. Both Giroux and Det. Joyce Schertzer were in court on a Brazen 2 matter on Wednesday and were marking their calendars for March 19, the day set as a potential public release time for more information on the case.

Innovation hub

IT giant to invest $100M in Toronto

Information technology giant Cisco has named Toronto as the location of one of four new global innovation hubs.

The California-based company, which is the world's largest maker of computer-networking equipment, said it will invest $100 million in the Toronto centre over the next decade.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

York Regional Police

Officer charged with fraud

A York Regional Police officer is facing charges after an internal investigation into alleged misuse of insurance benefits. Const. Eric MacDonald, 40, is charged with two counts each of uttering false documents and fraud under $5,000, and one count of fraud over $5,000.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trustee harassed two senior staff, report alleges

Trustee Elizabeth Moyer harassed two senior staffers at the Toronto District School Board by hugging and touching one and making a sexually suggestive comment to another, say the results of a confidential investigation, Torstar has learned.

The complaint against the Scarborough Southwest trustee was launched by executive superintendent Jim Spyropoulos last year, but expanded to include a second executive superintendent, a female, who alleged Moyer told her "I would so do you" at an official board function in 2011.

The investigation, conducted by an outside law firm, found Moyer violated code of conduct and workplace harassment policies.

The findings against Moyer come as Toronto trustees battle allegations they have bullied and intimidated board staff for years, as well as each other.

At a meeting last Wednesday, Trustee Howard Goodman was accused of behaving in a threatening manner toward Director of Education Donna Quan. That incident led her and three senior educators to write to the chair of the board.

The deluge of bad behaviour prompted Chair Chris Bolton to request police officers for Wednesday night's meeting, to show the board is serious about getting the bad behaviour under control. The report regarding Moyer's conduct is not believed to make any recommendations on possible disciplinary measures.

The investigation found Moyer intervened on behalf of her two daughters to get them jobs in a youth program run by Spyropoulos, one meant for at-risk youth, and said it could possibly constitute a conflict of interest. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Elizabeth Moyer. COURTESY TDSB

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ROM to reveal treasures of Forbidden City

Premier Kathleen Wynne poses alongside exhibit affiliates during the ceremonial dotting of a dragon's eyes, marking the reveal of the Royal Ontario Museum's newest exhibit, The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China's Emperors. The exhibit, to be the centrepiece of the ROM's centennial celebrations, brings for the first time to Canada approximately 250 treasures that were part of Chinese imperial life for five centuries in a city strictly off-limits to all but the emperor and those closest to him. The Forbidden City exhibit will officially open to the public on Saturday. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

Shortage of listings fuels desperation among homebuyers

New listings below historic norms. But interest rates are so low, more people are looking to buy

House sales were up just 2.1 per cent in February, year over year, but prices jumped 8.6 per cent as buyers battled bitter weather and a shortage of new listings in what even many realtors are concerned is a worrisome new level of desperation to buy a house in Toronto.

The average sale price was $553,193 in February, up from $509,396 a year ago.

Just this week, the battle lines were tightly drawn on an up-and-coming street in the Coxwell and Danforth area where a renovated semi-detached house, listed for $549,000, drew a stunning 25 bids. The Rhodes Avenue home went for $717,336, almost $170,000 over the asking price.

And expect more of that to come, cautions BMO Economics in a home-buying report released Wednesday that found the appetite for bidding wars is highest in Toronto, with some 44 per cent of folks surveyed saying they would get into a multiple-bidding situation in their efforts to find a house.

Some veteran Toronto realtors have been shocked by the level of desperation among house hunters so far this year, many of whom had moved to the sidelines two years ago, expecting house prices to drop, only to be seemingly panicked that prices are now spiking further out of reach.

All that pent-up demand is hitting the market at the same time that listings are unusually low, resulting in a sort of anything-goes mentality among house hunters, armed with low-rate mortgages and battered from several bidding wars already. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Condos

- Most of the uptick in GTA house sales in February was for condominiums — where ample supply is keeping demand and prices more stable — as sales spiked by 12.5 per cent, according to the Toronto Real Estate Board.
- Even then, the average condo sales price was up almost five per cent, year over year, with the average sale price hitting $347,222 across the GTA.

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UN envoy threatened, driven from Crimea by armed men

Ukraine. Officials say Robert Serry was not kidnapped and is 'in good shape' after being confronted by men with weapons

A special UN envoy cut short his mission in Crimea on Wednesday after being threatened by 10 to 15 armed men and ordered to leave the region, UN officials said.

After a confrontation that began as he was leaving naval headquarters and continued at a café, envoy Robert Serry was driven to Simferopol airport by the men and was flying to Ukraine's capital to continue his fact-finding mission, the officials said.

On Friday, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon asked Serry to go to Crimea as part of the fact-finding mission. Serry, who is currently the UN Mideast envoy, initially decided against going after consulting with authorities in the region. But UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson said Serry later decided it was important to go, given the "dramatic circumstances."

Ukrainian officials reported earlier Wednesday that Serry had been kidnapped. But Eliasson denied that. He said Serry was threatened by the armed men, but was not abducted.

Eliasson said the men ordered Serry to leave Crimea and go to the airport. Serry refused, and was later seen in the café as armed men in camouflage outfits stood outside. He then got into a van with the men and was taken to the airport.

Eliasson told reporters that Serry "is in good shape physically. He is not kidnapped."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"I'm safe. My visit was interrupted for reasons that I cannot understand."

UN envoy Robert Serry

Police try to separate clashing pro-Russia demonstrators and supporters of the new Ukrainian government in Donetsk, Ukraine, Wednesday, where hundreds of demonstrators waving Russian flags stormed a government building. The region is the home city of fugitive president Viktor Yanukovych, who fled the country after protests in Kyiv. SERGEI CHUZAVKOV/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Canadian perspective

Russia is in 'violation of international law': Harper

Canada will send two observers to join an unarmed military mission in Ukraine and will impose more sanctions on the regime of fugitive Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Wednesday.

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a clear violation of international law," Harper said in a statement.

A spokeswoman for Defence Minister Rob Nicholson said the two members have arrived in Odessa, Ukraine, and were co-ordinating with Ukrainian and other observers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

As leaders meet in Paris, France sends Russia a warship

BPC Vladivostock leaves Saint-Nazaire's harbour in France on Wednesday.

DAVID VINCENT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A French-built warship designed to strengthen Russia's ability to deploy troops, tanks and helicopter gunships is getting its first test run Wednesday — just as Western powers are trying to rein in Russian President Vladimir Putin's military threat to Ukraine.

A spokesman for the shipbuilder says the Vladivostok helicopter carrier is setting sail from the French Atlantic port of Saint-Nazaire. A few hundred kilometres away in Paris, France's government is hosting American, Russian and other leading world diplomats Wednesday amid mounting tensions over Ukraine.

The warship is part of a $1.8-billion deal that marked the biggest-ever sale of NATO weaponry to Moscow, a deal that already raised eyebrows both within Russia's military circles and among France's Western allies in 2011.

France has criticized Russia's military incursion into Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, but says it has no plans to scrap the defence deal.

France, like many of Russia's European trading partners, has found itself wedged between efforts to squeeze Russia diplomatically and its own economic interests. The French government's top priority is reviving its lacklustre economy and battling unemployment, and this deal underpins some 1,000 jobs. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Quebec premier announces April election

Pauline Marois. If elected to a majority, she has promised to consult Quebecers about a referendum

Quebecers will go the polls next month with the Parti Québécois chasing a majority government that could lead to another independence referendum.

Pauline Marois, first elected premier 18 months ago, announced the April 7 vote Wednesday after meeting with her cabinet.

Flanked by PQ MNAs inside the national assembly, Marois listed what she described as her government's accomplishments since coming to power in September 2012 following the defeat of Jean Charest's Liberals.

Recent polls have suggested the pro-independence party could capture a majority.

Marois' seven-minute speech was peppered with examples aimed at sending the message that her PQ government has created jobs and been a sound manager of the economy, an area long considered a party weakness.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"We have put lots of effort — lots of effort — in our economic policies to make Quebecers richer in all regions with quality jobs everywhere."

Quebec Premier Pauline Marois

Quebec Premier and Parti Québécois Leader Pauline Marois calls for a general provincial election, Wednesday in Quebec City. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lucky the dog brought to shore by U.S. Coast Guard

In this photo from Monday, provided by the U.S. Coast Guard, crew members assigned to Coast Guard Cutter Bristol Bay hoist aboard the ship a dog they found stranded on the ice of Lake St. Clair, Mich. The dog, who the crew later named Lucky, was taken inside the ship, where it was provided food and care before taking it to an animal shelter. U.S. COAST GUARD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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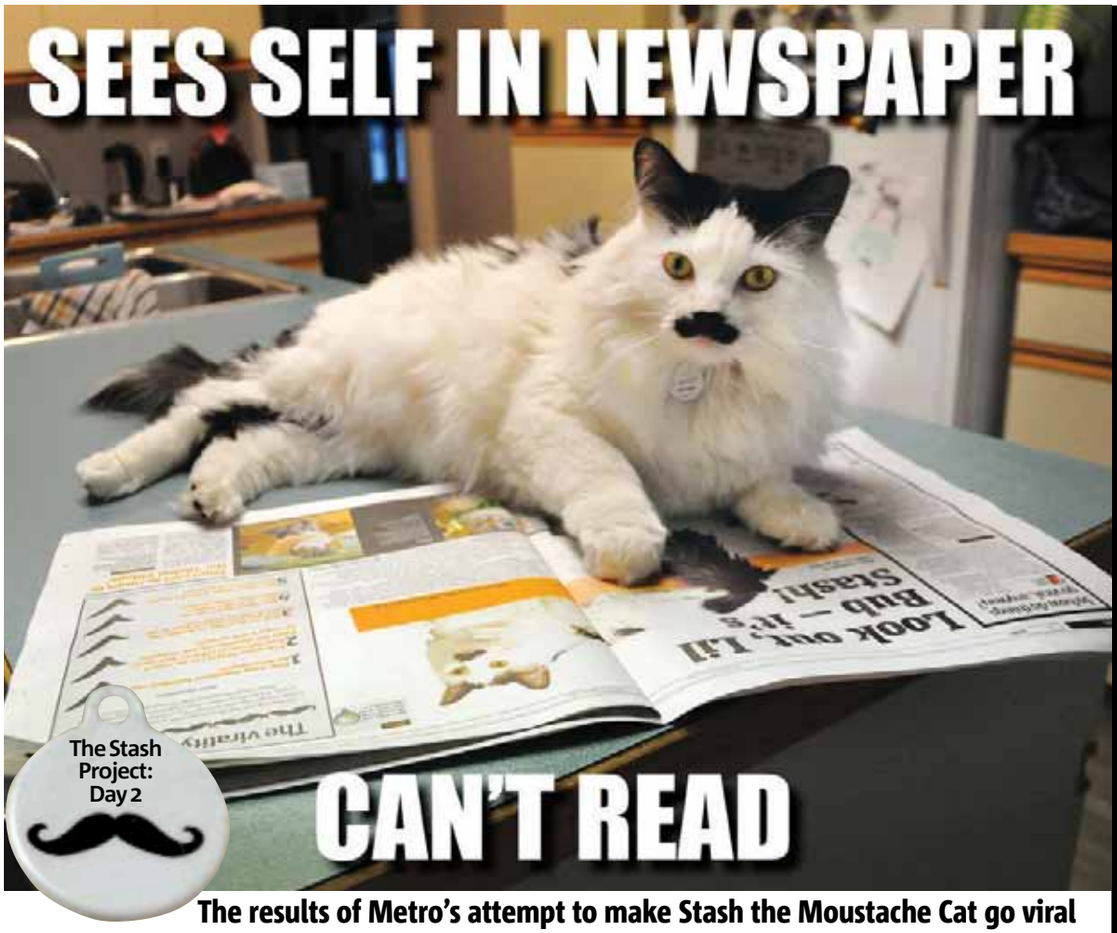
*For a complete listing of prizes, cash-out values, draw details and all rules and regulations, visit our website at lottery.cancer.ca. Win Big Every Day for the Month of April 2014. Only 200,000 tickets will be sold. Wheels of Hope 50/50 draw tickets are unlimited and must be purchased in conjunction with a Daffodil Daily Lottery ticket. The total value of all prizes is $6,449,761.99, inclusive of all taxes and destination charges. Prizes may not be exactly as shown. Tickets are $100 each or 3 for $250 or 5 for $375. Tickets must be purchased in Ontario. Purchasers must be at least 18 years of age. At the time of printing, no $100 Ontario charity lottery offered more prizes worth $5,000 or more. Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario LL#6233; 50/50 LL#6234.



The results of Metro's attempt to make Stash the Moustache Cat go viral

SHANE GIBSON
Metro in Winnipeg

After giving Stash four weeks to blow up online, we called San Francisco-based social media expert Tim Hwang again to see what he thought of how we did ...

At first he said he was impressed, but when pressed Hwang admitted he thought we would have garnered even more followers than we did, simply because making cats popular online is, for lack of a better term, like shooting fish in a barrel.

"You guys picked up on one key thing, cats, which are already extremely popular on the Internet," he said, explaining that our numbers show we did well "locally," or within a particular online community, but that we didn't get the massive exposure needed to be considered hugely viral. "There are memes that sort of spread over the entire Internet, and that's an incredibly rare thing — it's sort of like lightning striking two or three times all in the same place.

"The factors that cause a piece of content to do that are really obscure, and it's an active and ongoing field of research just to try to figure out exactly what causes it."

Hwang, who researched Internet culture at Harvard University's Berkman Centre for Internet and Society, said Stash could still eventually go hugely viral even without our help.

"There's a lot of cases where content that is old and cold and dead comes back to life inexplicably," he said. "Some weird things can happen like that, where content gets rediscovered over time."

Why do cats run the Internet?

"I think cats are built ready for the Internet. They are small, cute ... and often get themselves in accidents that are funny." Tim Hwang

Cracking the virality code

It's not just national free daily newspapers wondering why things go viral — Hwang said a lot of people are paying big money to research the phenomenon.

"It's interesting because on some level (kittens becoming famous on the Internet) is kind of 'ha-ha' funny ... but there's a lot of interest from a number of very surprising quarters in trying to decide why things become popular online," he said.

"It's everything from academics to the private sector. Obviously advertisers are always trying to unlock this code."

But Hwang said there's an even darker element than advertisers hoping to get to the bottom of virality: politicians and governments are foaming at the mouth to know the secret too.

"That's where it turns to something that's actually a little more concerning," he said. "Because maybe the principles that allow a kitten to become famous online are the same things that can be used to destabilize a country.

"It's just funny to me, of course, that something like cats on the Internet are at the centre of it."

Online

For a video and photos of Stash and more, go to metronews.ca

TIM HWANG'S BENCHMARKS OF SUCCESS

1 How many Instagram followers can we accumulate? We accumulated 1,050 Instagram followers in a month. ✓

2 How many images can we collect from followers? (That is, how many times did someone use our "template" to create a new meme?) Trying to make Stash a meme failed, although one person did upload a macro of Stash to Instagram.

3 How much action on Reddit, the self-proclaimed front page of the Internet, can we generate? We posted photos of Stash to reddit/r/cats, and they got about 300 upvotes. ✓

4 How much traffic can we drive to Stash's website, stashthemoustachecat.com? Traffic to Stash's website rose about 3,000 per cent, but that's because he had virtually no traffic before he started posting on Instagram. ✓

5 How many views of Stash's Imgur pictures can we achieve? Views of Stash's pictures on Imgur totalled about 7,000 views, mostly from Reddit traffic. ✓

Managing an Internet cat

IRENE KUAN
Irene.Kuan@metronews.ca

The cat-pic community on Instagram is unlike any other. In Internet-cat land, everybody is nice, and there are no cyberbullies to be found.

Metro Winnipeg's managing editor Elisha Dacey knew she had a star kitty. Stash was born with a Chaplin-like mark on his upper lip (OK, fine, it's a Hitler-like mark, which makes Stash a member of the subgenre of e-kitties affectionately known as #kitlers).

In four weeks time, after posting 152 photos (#catoftheday), Stash went from an Instagram newbie to having 1,050 followers.

Stash did have a physical advantage over other cats, but there were several things to keep in mind when growing his new Instagram account, and I quickly realized that not everything goes viral without work.

Lesson 1: Decide on a personality Most viral cats capitalized on their appearance, but there were so many moustache cats (#moustachecat, #hipstercat) out there. I decided Stash was a friendly but vain cat.

Lesson 2: Hashtags Adding hashtags gave my photos more presence. There appeared to be no such thing as going overboard with hashtags, as long as I didn't add so many that they crashed my browser.

Lesson 3: Make some friends I had to stop being shy about talking to other Instagrammers, so I started stepping out: liking and commenting first on other accounts (#follow4follow).

Lesson 4: Never ignore compliments This was the most time-consuming part of this experiment — to answer every comment, say thanks to every compliment and like back photos of users who liked Stash's photos.

Lesson 5: Be active Don't disappear from posting for too long — not even for half a day.

More relaxed pot laws may be in the pipeline

Criminal Code. As it now stands, anyone convicted of possessing small amounts of marijuana can be jailed for up to 5 years

The federal Tories are considering more lenient pot laws, Justice Minister Peter MacKay said Wednesday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

The Conservative government is seriously considering more lenient marijuana laws that would allow police to ticket anyone caught with small amounts of pot instead of laying charges, Justice Minister Peter MacKay said Wednesday.

"We're not talking about decriminalization or legalization," MacKay said following the weekly Conservative caucus meeting on Parliament Hill.

"The Criminal Code would still be available to police, but we would look at options that would ... allow police to ticket those types of offences."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper is open to such an approach, he added.

MacKay has hinted in the past that such a move was under consideration. The country's police chiefs — as well as some Tory caucus members — have long called for ticketing people for pot possession instead of laying criminal charges.

But MacKay has also been among the Conservatives' fiercest critics of Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau's stance on the issue. Trudeau supports the legalization of marijuana, a position the Tories have mocked with gleeful abandon.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Vigil for Loretta Saunders

Sharon Armstrong of Ottawa takes part in a vigil on Parliament Hill on Wednesday for Loretta Saunders and to call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women. Two people have been charged with first-degree murder in her death. In a cruel irony, Saunders was writing a thesis on murdered and missing aboriginal women before she died. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

One-cent cheque

Defence minister gives his two cents on the cheque fiasco

Defence Minister Rob Nicholson says the government blunder that delivered a one-cent cheque to the mother of a dead Canadian soldier will never be repeated.

Nicholson tells the House of Commons that he spoke with government officials shortly after learning about the cheque during question period Tuesday.

He also says he's scheduled a phone call Thursday to personally apologize to the mother of Cpl. Justin Stark, who took his own life in October 2011 after a seven-month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

The one-cent cheque was issued by the Public Works department and marked "CF Release Pay."

While it remains unclear why the cheque was issued, Nicholson says it was the result of what he called an "insensitive bureaucratic screw-up." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Usage-based insurance in Canada?
What the Beep!
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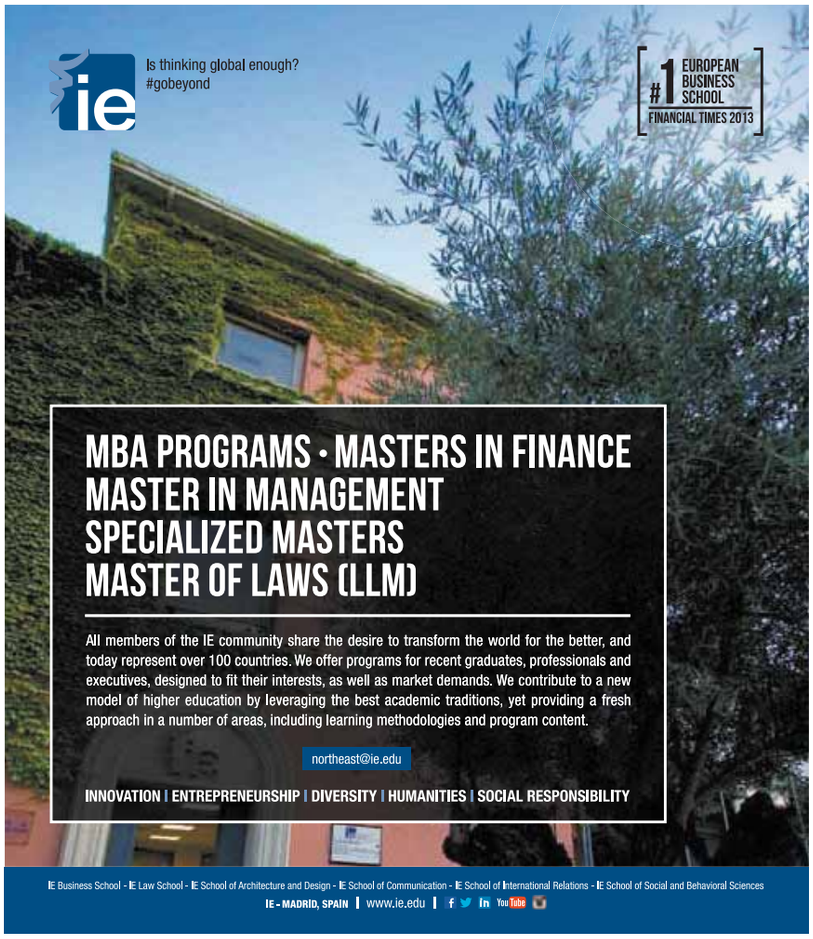
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WHO's new sugar target: About six teaspoons a day

Pushback. Nutritional experts say food industry would need to dramatically reformulate products to meet the targets

The World Health Organization is again urging people to lower the amount of sugar they eat, suggesting there are health benefits to restricting so-called free sugars to less than five per cent of one's dietary intake.

For the average adult, that would be about six teaspoons (30 millilitres) of sugar a day — less than the sugar contained in a single can of sugar-sweetened soda. For children, it could be as low as three teaspoons (15 ml) of sugar a day, said Dr. Francesco Branca, director of the WHO's department of nutrition for health and development.

Nutrition experts warn us to try to limit our intake of added sugars but few authoritative voices offer guidance on how much to consume.
JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

In draft recommendations issued Wednesday, the Geneva-based global health agency said people should limit their intake of sugar to no more than 10 per cent of their daily calorie intake, but if they could get to five per cent, that would be better.

"The five per cent would probably be the ideal one and the 10 per cent is the more realistic one," Branca said.

Both would likely be a stretch for many Canadians.

The most recent Canadian data, from the 2004 Canadian Consumer Health Survey, shows that on average Canadians consumed 110 grams of sugar a day that year — the equivalent of 26 teaspoons (130 ml) of sugar. Sugar calories made up 21.4 per cent of the average Canadian's total calorie intake.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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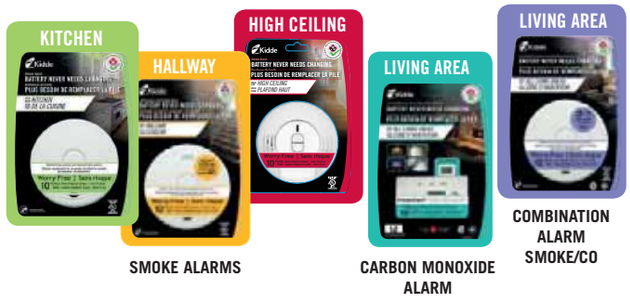

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Climate change could end your guacamole: Chipotle

Bland burrito. Global warming could force chain to pull avocado spread off its menu

A worker stirs guacamole at a Chipotle restaurant in Miami, Fla., on Wednesday. The fast food chain is tossing around the idea that it would temporarily suspend sales of guacamole due to climate change. JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

Climate change could knock your favourite fast foods off the menu.

Restaurant chain Chipotle is warning that it may have to temporarily stop serving guacamole or certain salsas in the event of extreme weather because of climate change.

"Increasing weather volatility or other long-term changes in global weather patterns, including any changes associated with global climate change, could have a significant impact on the price or availability of some of our ingredients," the restaurant said in its annual report released last month. Other major fast-food chains, such as McDonald's and Tim Hortons are also bracing for the long-term effects of a warmer planet.

If climate change makes a key ingredient, such as avocados, too expensive, Chipotle says it may have to pull dishes like guacamole from the menu instead of paying the higher price for the raw ingredients.

Chipotle pointed to recent droughts in the U.S., which have driven up the price of beef, as an example.

Professor Sylvain Charlebois, at the University of Guelph's College of Management and Economics, says restaurants have good reason to worry. She, too, points to the ongoing drought in California, which is driving up the price of lettuce, strawberries and almonds. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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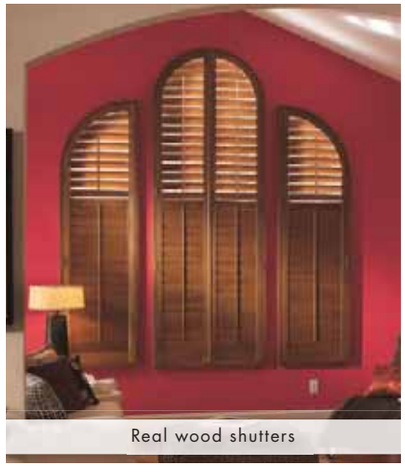
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Virtual bank robber to blame for fall: Flexcoin

Digital currency.
Alberta 'bank' focused on bitcoins folds after it claims attacker 'exploited a flaw in the code'

An Alberta-based online "bank" specializing in bitcoins is blaming a technical flaw for the theft of its digital currency that forced it to close its doors this week.

In a statement on its website Wednesday, Flexcoin says 896 bitcoins were stolen from its online vault. That translates into a loss of about $600,000, based on bitcoin's current trading value.

Background

Since its creation in 2009, bitcoin has become popular among tech enthusiasts and risk-seeking investors because it allows people to make one-to-one transactions, buy goods and services and exchange money across borders without involving banks, credit card issuers or other third parties. Criminals like bitcoin for the same reasons.

"Flexcoin was attacked and robbed of all coins in the hot wallet," the company reported on its website. "As Flexcoin does not have the resources, assets, or otherwise to come back from this loss, we are closing our doors immediately."

An email to the company requesting comment was not immediately returned. But the website did provide details on how the company thinks the theft happened.

"The attacker successfully exploited a flaw in the code which allows transfers between Flexcoin users," it said.

Flexcoin said by sending thousands of simultaneous requests, the attacker was able to move coins from one user account to another until the sending account was overdrawn. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Three's a very welcome crowd on 3nder

Fancy a threesome? Dimo Trifonov, the London, England-based entrepreneur behind dating app 3nder, thinks you do. The spin-off of location-based hookup apps like Tinder and Grindr aims to remove the seedy stigma attached to the ménage à trois. Seeking a threesome "should be something that doesn't make you feel like a sexual freak," Trifonov says. The app is currently in beta mode, but already has 23,000 subscribers. METRO WORLD NEWS

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OPENING THE LID ON OPIOIDS

HE SAYS

John Mazerolle
metronews.ca

How did "a pain in the neck" come to describe an annoying person?

Because I have a pain in my neck keeping me home from work, and it's much more than annoying. When the doctor asked me to rate the pain on a scale of one to 10, I said I'd need a spinal tap because this one goes to 11.

OK, I didn't say that. What I said was: "OW makeitstop OW."

An annoying person should be a rug burn. Or a hangnail. Or a paper cut. All pretty good insults, come to think of it.

A "pain in the neck"? That should be reserved for the Atillas and Stalins and Trumps. History's greatest monsters.

This hurts so much that I've been watching Game of Thrones and after every decapitation I think, "Oh, that'd be sweet relief. Wish I was a traitor."

The good news is there's a silver lining — possibly lining the muscle in my neck, which would explain the throbbing. The doctor, seeing the brave way I was handling adversity, prescribed me a heavy-duty painkiller to provide relief. This means:

1) I get to take opioids.

2) I get to write about opioids.

3) If I write a lame column and make hack jokes about my doctor's handwriting, I can blame the opioids.

John's Guide To Prescription Painkillers

1) I joke around in this column, but you should never, ever abuse drugs that aren't liquor, beer, wine, snuff, cigarettes, cigars, marijuana, hash or coffee. And even then, only several times a month.

2) Try to look suspicious when you ask for your painkillers. That way, when the pharmacist makes a phone call and you check out, you get to act offended.

3) To check the effectiveness of the security cap, be sure to leave your medication alone in your living room for long periods of time. Better safe than sorry.

4) Remember to look under the rim for your chance at free drugs or one of seven 2014 Dodge Durangos.

5) All the drug-safety guidelines I read remind you to turn on the lights when you take pills. This is to ensure that you're not blind. If you are blind, call a doctor. Unless you've always been blind, in which case call a friend. They'd love to hear from you.

6) After a statistically significant sample of three Percocet, I can say the most interesting effect of opioids is that they don't make you feel good; they just make you feel less. Part of me had expected to have a Yellow Submarine/Twin Peaks vision trip, but really it was more of a Big Bang Theory/According to Jim trip. I didn't feel anything, other than hoping it would be over in the next 22 minutes.

And that's my guide to prescription painkillers. Now that I understand how powerful these drugs are, it makes sense to me that my doctor's handwriting is so scribbly! Am I right? Sorry, sorry. Dave's not here, man.

ZOOM

It's the circle of life

ANDREW BURTON/GETTY IMAGES

Human hamster wheel spins in N.Y.C.

Ward Shelley, top, and Alex Schweder, both professors, designers and artists, live in their art installation piece titled In Orbit on Wednesday in the Williamsburg neighbourhood of the Brooklyn Borough of New York City. Shelley and Schweder are in the midst of living in the hamster wheel-like environment for 10 days; the wheel was designed complete with beds, desks, a kitchen and bathroom and chair for relaxing.

GETTY IMAGES

Working together through the grind

One wrong move by him or his fellow human hamster and they risk being thrown off. They are perched on opposite ends of the wheel, 180 degrees from each other, and must carefully co-ordinate their movements. When one walks, the other must walk in the opposite direction. When one stops, the other must stop.

"It's really an exploration of what it means to collaborate," Schweder said. "It's an exploration of trust between two people."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

So, how about those new year's resolutions? Two months into the year, are you still hitting the gym, reading more, spending less and being an all-around saint? For those who have perhaps fallen off the wagon, here are some apps to help pick you back up.

Everest:

Whether it's to climb Mount Everest or just pay off your debt, this free iPhone app helps you get your goals in order — and follow friends (and strangers) as they progress with theirs.

Habit Clock:

Start your day "right" with this alarm clock/habit-forming app. After you hit snooze, Habit Clock keeps your morning on track by sending reminders to finish your predetermined morning habits.

Habit List:

You can't develop habits unless you track them, or at least that's the logic behind Habit List. The iPhone app lets you record your tasks, sends reminders and keeps you focused.

ISTOCK IMAGES

Comments

RE: Passenger's Sexist Note Left On WestJet Flight Stirs Pilot's Heated Response, published March 4

Here's a plan. Keep doing what you're doing and try not to be offended so easily. People will always have their own outlook on life, and no matter how skewed it is they have a right to believe in whatever they want. Further, they have a right to express their own incorrect, correct, or outrageous opinions. Why let someone's rant or comment get you down? Why vent in anger on Facebook? Why even give it a second thought? We call this the "Me Generation" because the majority of people have developed a large sense of self-entitlement and people tend to take every insult and impunity to heart. **disqus_z3Lferpz-rN posted to metronews.ca**

I disagree whole heartedly Disqus_z3LferpzrN. I do agree that everyone is entitled to their opinion. But there comes a point when the opinions are just not acceptable and when offered freely and openly like this they are open to the ridicule they deserve. This is SEXISM pure and simple and is not to be tolerated. As any kind of prejudice should not be tolerated. **TJE posted to metronews.ca**

For you to say that "any kind of prejudice should not be tolerated" is in fact extremely prejudicial and I will not tolerate it. Everyone has prejudice in their thinking towards something whether people like you like it or not, or even realize it or not. Some people are stupid. Some cultures are backwards. Some religions are horrible. I have the right to make such a judgment based on thoughtful study of the facts. **Rory Kyle Maxwell posted to metronews.ca**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
Send us your comments: torontoletters@metronews.ca

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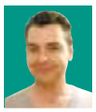
Candy's return a no-brainer

Kids in the Hall. Comedy troupe's only movie, Brain Candy, didn't do well at the box office, but has since gained a cult following and now it's back in the city and live!



BACKSTAGE PASS
Ian Gormely
scene@metronews.ca

The cast of Kids in the Hall will be performing a 'stage reading' of their flop-yet-cult movie Brain Candy at the Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival next week. CONTRIBUTED

It was supposed to be the Kids in the Hall's big breakout. Instead, the Canadian comedy troupe's debut feature film Brain Candy bombed at the box office, putting the final nail in the group's coffin for the remainder of the '90s.

Yet the film became a cult favourite and now the group is ready to revisit the film's dark, surrealist script.

On Tuesday night Dave Foley, Bruce McCulloch, Kevin McDonald, Mark McKinney and Scott Thompson will reprise the many characters they played in the 1996 film, performing a "stage reading" for the Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival. A yet to be announced celebrity will narrate the proceedings.

"We didn't put our hit characters in it. But we put Cancer Boy in it," says Bruce McCulloch, recalling the purposely offensive character the group created for the final episode of their much-loved television series. "I love us for that."

The film's loose plot involves a group of scientists who invent an antidepressant called GLeeMONEX. Their corporate overlords push the pill into production before it's ready with catastrophic, and hilarious, results.

McCulloch can't recall how the idea of a stage reading came about, although he had done one in San Francisco for David Wain's similarly absurdist cult-comedy, Wet Hot American Summer. "It felt like the right time," he says. "It's like revisiting an old, weird friend."

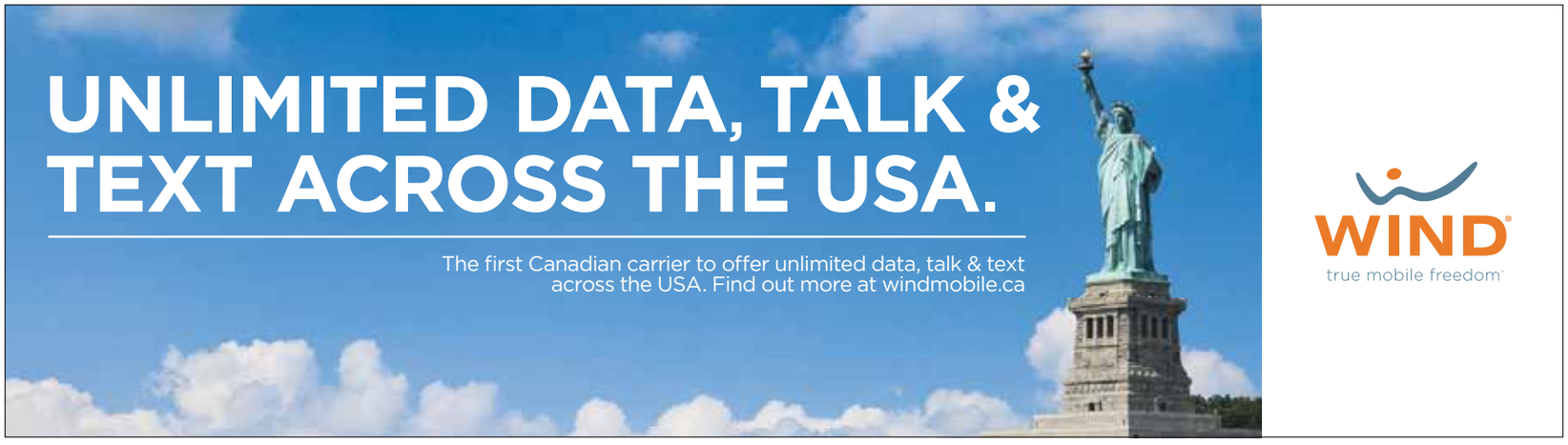
Acrimony surrounded the film's production. Creative fissures between group members compounded personal tragedies; Foley had already moved on to his role on NewsRadio and wasn't credited as a writer on the film.

Brain Candy captured a weird, turbulent time in the group's history, says McCulloch and threw it on the big screen for all to see. "I can see what people might not like about it," he says. "It's not super approachable. But it's dark fun."

The Toronto Sketch Comedy Festival presents a Live Staged Reading of Kids in the Hall: Brain Candy – Tuesday at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre, 190 Princes' Blvd at 8 p.m. Tickets $39. See torontosketchfest.com for more details.

And there's more ...

Alternate ending. Along with the stage reading, Kevin McDonald will be screening an alternate ending to the film. It was cut in editing in favour of the more upbeat one that ended up in the final cut. "I saw it in the editing room many years ago," says McCulloch. The footage has floated around online but never been released commercially and not even the group have access to the original. "We're one dumb guy," he says. "It feels in character that we're screening some pirated footage that none of us really have."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Thou art a villain, Ms. Eva Green

300: Rise of an Empire. Actress seems to be having a little too much fun playing a psychopath

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Eva Green is the unconscionable Artemisia in 300: Rise of an Empire, which opens on Friday. CONTRIBUTED

Eva Green was really looking for an all-out villain to sink her teeth into, and she got that and more with the role of Artemisia in 300: Rise of an Empire.

Green sits down with Metro to discuss playing nuts, using sex as a weapon and the allure the mystical side of things.

You're playing more than just the typical villain in this.

Yes. I … kill people, and I'm not very nice, yes. It's pure villainy. You know, lots of actors will go, "No, she has cracks, she's human." And of course you learn about her back-story and how she's been betrayed by her own countrymen and it has kind of hardened her heart big time. The only challenge is to find maybe some jubilation in this because yeah, she's just … mental. She has no conscience and she can't tolerate incompetence, and anybody who doesn't follow her orders, just (snaps) "Off with his head!" You can't do that in real life, really.

You also have probably one of the more aggressive sex scenes in this.

I mean, it's more of a fight than a sex scene, really. It's so violent that it was kind of staged as a fight scene. I love when it's kind of clinical. Even a normal sex scene, actually, when they go, "You put your hand here and you here," "How do you do? We're going to have sex." And here it's two warriors having sex. They deal with violence every day, and this is how they do it. It's kind of S&M without the leather. It's not very romantic, let's say.

Netflix

The Trailer Park Boys are back

Light up a smoke and pour yourself a rum and coke, folks! It's time to celebrate as Ricky, Julian and Bubbles make their way to Netflix with 10 new episodes later this year.

But first, the latest seasons will be added in Canada and the U.S., while Seasons 1-7 will be available for the first time in the U.K, Ireland, Netherlands, the Nordics and Latin America.

It's been several years since the cameras have followed Ricky, Julian and Bubbles around the Sunnyvale Trailer Park, so there's a lot to catch up on: Ricky recently harvested an enormous weed crop which he has successfully hidden in the walls of his trailer, Julian has opened a bar and gym in his trailer and Bubbles is in the process of opening what he calls a 'Shed and Breakfast' business.

METRO

Hollywood

Conan to host MTV Movie Awards

Conan O'Brien will be serving up buckets of golden popcorn.

O'Brien announced Tuesday on his TBS talk show Conan that he's hosting this year's MTV Movie Awards. The annual movie celebration that honours winners with popcorn-shaped trophies is scheduled for April 13 at the Nokia Theatre in downtown Los Angeles.

"After eight years of intense negotiations, I am honoured to announce I am hosting MTV's second most prestigious awards show," the comedian joked in a statement.

It marks the first time O'Brien has hosted the MTV Movie Awards. He previously hosted the Primetime Emmy Awards in 2002 and 2006. Past hosts of the MTV Movie Awards have included Jimmy Fallon, Aziz Ansari, Russell Brand, Rebel Wilson and Sarah Silverman.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 22

Bryan Cranston drums up the drama

Broadway debut. Former Breaking Bad star presides over the stage as Lyndon B. Johnson in All the Way

Bryan Cranston doesn't need to chase paychecks anymore. His salary for Breaking Bad wasn't exactly at drug kingpin levels, but he's secure. So now what? Now it gets interesting.

"I don't need work — I don't need to work ever again," says the actor. "So the choices that I make now should all be things that I think are either fun or important or challenging."

Cranston's next move reflects this choice. He's making his Broadway debut in a role far from Walter White — playing former U.S. president Lyndon B. Johnson in All the Way.

Cranston plays Johnson during his first year in office following the assassination of John F. Kennedy and explores both his fight for re-election and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"I like to think that I'm well cast for this role. He was a complicated man," Cranston says. "You only make your Broadway debut once and I'm encouraged that I hitched my wagon to a really well-written play."

No matter how well-written, a three-hour play about the political manoeuvring of an irascible president 50 years ago may not be considered serious box office catnip. Cranston's star power changes that.

"Boy, I planned that well, didn't I?" jokes playwright Robert Schenkkan, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for his epic The Kentucky Cycle.

Johnson was originally handled by actor Jack Willis when it debuted at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2012, but Cranston jumped aboard last fall when the play next went to the American Repertory Theater outside Boston.

The role requires Cranston to be bullying, insecure, charming, charismatic, ruthless and scary.

Cranston has shown all that in a career that has gone from goofy comedy in Malcolm in the Middle to ferocious drama in Breaking Bad.

"That's who LBJ was — he was charming and witty and incredibly funny, a great raconteur, the life of the party. And also violent and vile and cruel and utterly terrible," says Schenkkan."I don't write with an actor in mind, but if I had, Bryan Cranston would have been at the head of the list."

Bill Rauch, the artistic director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, who directs All the Way, says attracting Cranston was certainly useful to gin up excitement but he hasn't been a diva. "Bryan is a brilliant actor who brings his ferocity, his emotional intelligence, his passion, his heart to bear on the role," says Rauch. "He really is a true member of the company and a leader of the company. There's no sense that he's the star and the star is separate from the rest of the cast."

Political plays on Broadway haven't always been big draws, but the creative team behind All the Way describes it as a "thriller" and a "white-knuckle ride." Schenkkan stresses that what he's written is not a documentary or history: He's a dramatist exploring issues of power and morality, and asking how far we are willing to go to do good.

"What Robert's (Schenkkan) done so successfully I think is to create this dramatic framework where the actors get to come to life in a very exciting and energized way," says Robert Petkoff, who plays Sen. Hubert Humphrey. "It takes on a life, it breathes in a way that becomes compelling to watch."

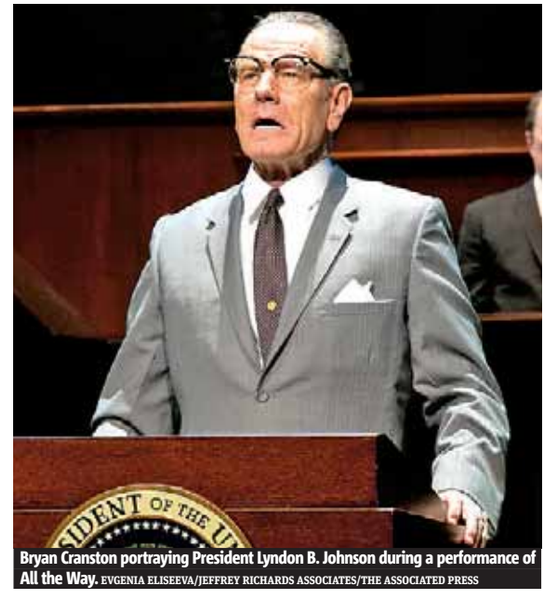
Cranston agrees, saying All the Way is accurate to the past but it's not history at the expense of drama. "Nobody ever leaves a theatre and goes, 'Oh my God that play was so boring but historically accurate,'" he says. "We don't want that."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"I don't need work — I don't need to work ever again. So the choices that I make now should all be things that I think are either fun or important or challenging."

Bryan Cranston



Bryan Cranston portraying President Lyndon B. Johnson during a performance of All the Way. EVGENIA ELISEEVA/JEFFREY RICHARDS ASSOCIATES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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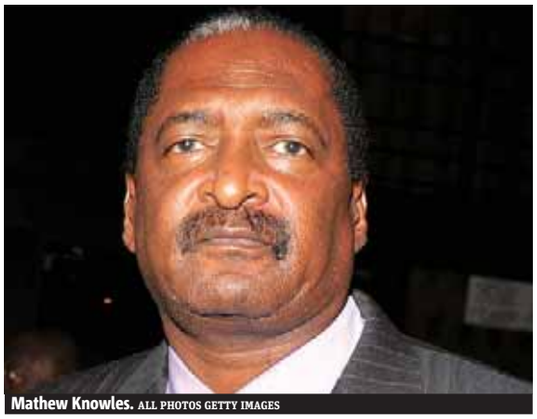
METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES



Mathew Knowles. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Beyoncé's dad gets a break on his baby mama bills

A judge has approved a substantial cut in the amount of child support that Beyoncé Knowles' father must pay because his income dropped after his superstar daughter fired him as her manager.

A ruling obtained by The Associated Press shows that a Los Angeles Superior Court judge cut the amount Mathew Knowles must pay to actress Alexsandra Wright from $12,000 US a month to roughly $2,500 US a month. The payments are for a son Knowles fathered with Wright while he was still married to Beyoncé's mother.

Judge Scott Gordon's order is retroactive to February 2013. Although the singer's name is not mentioned in the ruling, it notes that her father's income has substantially fallen since she fired him in 2011. Mathew Knowles sought a reduction in his child support payments, and a hearing was held earlier this year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Another McConaughey kid in nine months?

Don't be surprised if Matthew McConaughey names his next kid Oscar, as the newly minted Academy Award winner had just one thing on his mind following his win for best actor Sunday night.

"We won't stay long at the after-party," he told the Sun. "I want to go home and make another baby." McConaughey and wife Camila Alves are already parents to five-year-old Levi, four-year-old Vida and 14-month-old Livingston.

Matthew McConaughey

The Word

Lohan's reality is still stranger than fiction

MELINDA TAUB
Metro World News

In the first look at Lindsay Lohan's OWN post-rehab reality show, her life looks fairly grim. She confesses that being stalked by paparazzi makes her feel like a prisoner "all the time." She looks alternately bored and panicked throughout. Handlers tattle to Oprah that Lindsay is being unprofessional, skipping photo shoots and may be backsliding into addiction.

"This is exactly what everybody said was going to happen," Oprah sighs, "and I believed differently. She doesn't understand that this is your life."

We also glimpse a confrontation between the two, during which Oprah exhorts the OWN star to take her recovery seriously. "My truth is that I really do want you to win," says Oprah.

"No, it's not that I'm not ready to do that. I do want to," Lindsay insists.

"You need to cut the bulls—," Oprah returns.

Not defending Lindsay for leaving crews and coworkers hanging, but possibly her subconscious has realized that most newly recovering alcoholics would be better off anywhere but the set of a reality television show.

I'm sure that's not the case here, though. Oprah would never endanger someone's recovery just for the sake of OWN.

Katy Perry

Apparently when Katy Perry kisses a girl, she doesn't like it

Katy Perry kissed another girl, and this time she wasn't really that into it. While visiting Australian talk show Sunrise this week, Perry recounted her close encounter with Miley Cyrus at the Bangerz singer's concert in Los Angeles. "I just walked up to her to give her, like, a friendly, girly kiss. You know, as girls do," Perry said. "And then she, like, tried to move her head and go deeper and I pulled away. God knows where that tongue has been."

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From the runway, with love

Fall/Winter Fashion Month has taken four countries by storm once again. Here's a taste of what Metro's gurus of glam were lucky enough to see in the last leg of their high speed, high fashion city-hop. Until next season, style fanatics!

METRO WORLD NEWS

Roberto Cavalli (Milan)

Fire makes the perfect backdrop for Cavalli's flamboyant clothes. When a collection has heaps of dramatic fur on top of feathers on top of python on top of fringe, and tassels, and studs, and beading, the addition of a ring of flames and smoke seems only right and natural. He's cultivated an iconic look that may not set any agendas, but epitomizes Milanese fashion and its trademark carnal glamour. This is the drama we look for from Milano Moda Donna and he's delivered.

Major trends: Python, tassels, contrasting textures, blanket coats, gold.

Prada (Milan)

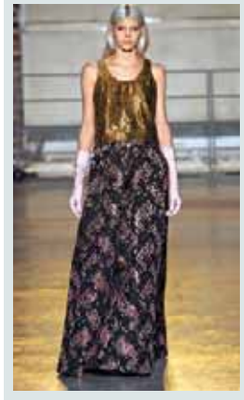
Prada has an unmistakable way of making the garish look intelligent, the street style bait not look so try-hard, and the commercially appealing look artful. That's why most of these pieces (I'm placing bets on the shearling jackets and sporty platform shoes), which would look ridiculous in anyone else's hands, will most likely fly off the shelves. Remember, Prada has consistently posted sales growth for several years now. Even if this collection is not her most exciting, she's still on a roll.

The major trends: Seventies-inspired prints and shapes, and shearling.

Rochas (Paris)

All of the clothes are stunning, right down to the densely beaded gloves. But too many in the second half of the show look heavy and fussy, like a wardrobe malfunction waiting to happen. That said, this collection falls right in line with the memo that clearly went out for autumn/winter '14: glamour and all of the decorative trappings that come with it, rules.

Major trends: Dense embellishments, outsized volume, experimentations with texture and longer fuller skirts.



Carven (Paris)

Guillaume Henry has referenced a decade other than the '60s this season and I appreciate that. His forties shapes and silhouettes have a film noir sensibility about them. Interestingly, this collection presents a more grown-up look than the girlier, whimsical fare. The strongest looks are the longest: straight, midi-length skirt suits and belted coat dresses and jackets that look like the stuff of Ingrid Bergman movies, with a modern twist.

Major trends: Longer midi skirts, shiny embellishments, shades of blue, and experiments with texture.

Sonia Rykiel (Paris)

The emphasis on knits and sense of humour present in a series of dresses emblazoned with 'Moi' are classic Rykiel, but there's a new contemporary, urban polish here as well. Best of all, everything looks so incredibly cosy and easy to wear. There are enormous Mongolian fur coats, relaxed, softly tailored trousers, oversized waffle knit sweaters and lithe, lean skirt suits, all in the warmest wools and cashmeres.

Major trends: Relaxed slouchy shapes, shaggy outerwear, textured three-dimensional surfaces and midi-length skirts.

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Canada says yes to Kleinfeld, Pnina

Guru of the gown. Sought-after wedding dress designer Pnina Tornai excited to cater to Canadian brides

Tornai's designs, made in Tel Aviv, are known to come with a price tag in the five-figure range. CHRIS YOUNG / THE CANADIAN PRESS

Pnina Tornai already has received plenty of love from Canadian brides who have flocked to New York's Kleinfeld salon to snap up one of her lavish dresses, as well as fans who've seen the gowns — and the designer herself — featured on popular TLC series Say Yes to the Dress.

Homegrown brides-to-be seeking their own personal Pnina will soon have a shorter distance to travel. Hudson's Bay is preparing to open its own Kleinfeld salon May 1 at its Queen Street location in downtown Toronto, where Tornai's creations will be among the featured attractions.

"For eight years, I've been seeing the Canadian bride in New York, and for some reason the Canadian bride always ends up buying a Pnina dress — one of my dresses," the affable Tornai said during a recent interview in Toronto, outfitted in a sleek, long-sleeved black dress (one of her own creations) paired with Christian Louboutin boots.

"It's so obvious for me that I have to be here, because that's my bride."

Tornai was in town for what was billed as her first Canadian appearance — a trunk show at The Wedding Room wedding show — where she brought about 60 gowns and met with brides-to-be.

She has taken the work commute to new extremes, travelling monthly from her hometown of Tel Aviv to New York for eight years to meet with brides.

Such devotion has brought her recognition and exposure through her runway showcases and work as a both a reality star and actress.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nuptials of the North

For eight years, I've been seeing the Canadian bride in New York, and for some reason the Canadian bride always ends up buying a Pnina dress — one of my dresses

Pnina Tornai

Canadian street style

Spotted in: Toronto

Name: Jennifer

Age: 25

Occupation: Retail Manager

What she's wearing:
Hat: Topshop
Glasses: Chanel
Scarf: Wilfred
Jacket: Wilfred
Shirt: Club Monaco
Bottoms: J Brand
Shoes: Zara
Bag: Givenchy

Her inspiration:
"I'm minimal yet eclectic. I'm inspired by people who look amazing in head to toe basics. I adore people who can modify current trends to preserve their own unique sense of style."

THE KIT IS A MULTI-PLATFORM BEAUTY AND FASHION BRAND WHICH INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE MAGAZINE AND DYNAMIC APP, A WEBSITE, KIT CHAT — AN E-NEWSLETTER PROGRAM — AND A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER SECTION TOO!

Trends Report

High-waisted jeans are predicted to be a huge trend this spring, but who are we kidding? They're not flattering on many women, not even some celebs. But if you're curious to try them out, go online to Trends Report to see three outfits I've put together that actually make high-waisted jeans look great.

- **Online.** Follow Irene on Twitter at @MetroIreneK or Instagram: kuanirene; metronews.ca/voices/trends-report

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Pizza marries nutrition

Red Pepper and Goat Cheese Pizza. March is Nutrition Month but healthy doesn't mean sacrificing flavour

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

Pizza is a fantastic meal to make on the fly, especially if you have a flatbread or ready-made pizza crust. It's got a big surface, with lots of room for nutrient-filled vegetables.

In this easy-to-make recipe, creamy goat cheese balances the bright and fresh flavours of red pepper, onion and tomato. Combined with mozzarella (a pizza classic), olives and basil, it's a healthy meal that's ready in about 20 minutes.

Feel free to experiment with whatever you might have in the fridge: feta is a welcome substitute for goat cheese; zucchini and mushrooms pair nicely too. Chicken with spinach, red peppers and cheese is another dietitian-approved combo that you can easily cook and enjoy!

Ingredients

- 1 12-inch round of flatbread or enough pizza dough or a 12-inch (30 cm) pizza crust
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
- 1 cup (250 ml) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) cup soft crumbled goat cheese
- 1 large red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 large tomato, sliced
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) sliced black olives
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) sweet Vidalia onion, sliced (optional)
- 1 tsp (5 ml) dried basil (or 2 tbsp/25 ml chopped fresh basil)

Using a baking stone is a great way to give your pizza a crusty finish. Place the pizza stone in a cool oven, turn on the oven and preheat the stone for about 45 minutes before cooking the pizza.

1. Preheat oven to 400 F (200 C) if using flatbread or 450 F (230 C) if using pizza dough

2. Place flatbread on baking sheet. Alternatively, if using pizza dough, spread out dough on lightly greased pizza pan to make a 12-inch (30 cm) circle.

3. Brush olive oil on top of flatbread or pizza dough. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Top with goat cheese, red pepper, tomato, black olives, onion, if using, and basil.

4. Bake pizza in bottom half of preheated oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until crust is golden and filling is bubbly.

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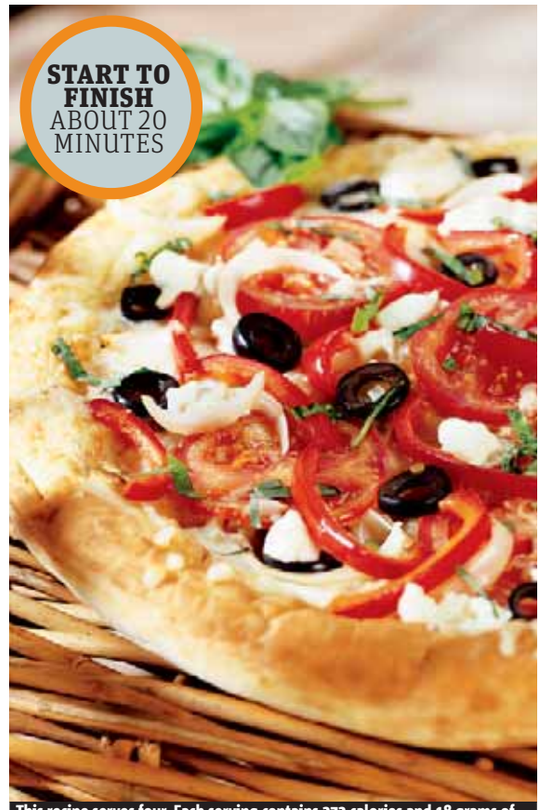
Healthy helpers

Dietitians of Canada offers up affordable kitchen must-have suggestions.

- **Steamer basket.** Steaming your veggies is a quick, easy, and healthy alternative to sautéing.
- **Oil mister.** The tool gives you precise control over how much oil is used.
- **Box grater.** While we love using our grater for cheese, it can also be used for all kinds of vegetables. Salads with grated zucchini, beets or carrots are a tasty side dish option.
- **Measuring spoon set.** If you thought these were only good for measuring liquid, think again. You can use them to sprinkle just the right amount of herbs or spices on your dish.



This recipe serves four. Each serving contains 373 calories and 18 grams of fat. DIETICIANS OF CANADA

Lunch. Zucchini Frittata

This recipe serves six. One serving contains 126 calories and 9 grams of fat.
DIETICIANS OF CANADA

Ingredients

- 2 cups (500 ml) sliced zucchini
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) butter or margarine
- 1 1/2 tsp (7 ml) olive oil
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) chopped parsley
- 1 tsp (5 ml) ground fennel
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) ground dried rosemary
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) salt
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp (25 ml) shredded Cheddar

1. In ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat, cook zucchini and onion in butter and olive oil 5 mins. or until tender.

2. In another bowl, combine eggs, parsley, fennel, rosemary, salt and pepper; pour over vegetables. Cook over medium heat, without stirring, until bottom of mixture has set but top is still soft. Sprinkle cheese on top. Place under preheated broiler 3 mins. or until cheese is melted and top is brown.

For your phone

Cookspiration (iPad/iPhone; Free)

MIND THE APP
Kris Abel
@RealKrisAbel
life@metronews.ca

This Dietitians of Canada app recommends meals based on your mood and time of day. Recipe selection is pretty creative and high on nutritional details, but surprisingly light on instruction.

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Legal Matters

Pre-build dilemma

I have purchased a pre-build townhome which is scheduled for completion later this year. I have been approached by a realtor who works in the area to see if I would like to transfer the sale to an interested buyer. Is there anything I should be aware of in this situation before I agree to proceed with the transfer of my agreement of purchase and sale?

LEGAL MATTERS
Jeffrey Cowan
home@metronews.ca

What you are contemplating is assignment of your agreement of purchase and sale to another interested party. In virtually every builder's standard agreement of purchase and sale there is a clause dealing with this potential situation; wherein they do not allow the advertising, listing or sale of the property before the final closing without the prior written consent of the builder. If this occurs without their knowledge and consent, the builder can claim the purchaser is in default and they will forfeit their deposits (which in the case of a more expensive property can be quite substantial). Do not proceed with your realtor until you have done whatever is necessary with the builder.

The reason why builders put this provision in the agreement is because they don't want purchasers to speculate on their property while there may still be leftover inventory that the builder has been unable to sell. Assignments can be viewed to soften the market for the remaining properties in the development. I have had a builder claim (and retain) a purchaser's deposit for doing exactly this.

The devil is in the detail. Not a nice surprise!

Follow Jeff Cowan on Twitter @Cowan_Law or on the website cowanlaw.ca, or email him at jeff@cowanlaw.ca

Fort York area park hub of growth

Garrison Point. Planned community of five condo towers will include walkway to downtown

CONDO TRENDS
Duncan McAllister
life@metronews.ca

There has been a tremendous urban renewal effort in the areas surrounding Old Fort York, well known as the 43-acre national historic site, home to a campus of original War of 1812 military buildings.

This swath of land is nestled between Liberty Village to the West and Concord CityPlace to the East. It's south of the King West Village and north of the lake. It's an interesting corner of downtown Toronto, being close to the core, the entertainment district and the financial district as well as the waterfront.

In what will soon be an initiative to link up these disparate neighbourhoods, a four-acre community park will serve as a hub with pedestrian walkways, bridges and parks. Part of the five towers of Garrison Point, a master-planned community from Cityzen Development, Fernbrook Homes and DiamondCorp, the new cityscape will enable pedestrians to travel from King Street West all the way to the waterfront.

"I see ourselves basically at the hub of these communities," Cityzen president Sam Crignano tells Metro. "To the north and south of us is a rail line, so we are this triangle caught in between these two railway lines. These are pedestrian foot bridges, and the linkages west to Liberty Village already exist through the road and sidewalk networks."

In other developments later this year, the Fort York Visitor Centre will open to the public. The 24,000 square-foot complex will be located on the south side of Garrison Common and will host visitors to the historic site.

As well, the new Fort York Public Library is billed as Toronto's 99th library and will serve a community of adjacent condominiums including Context Development's 29-storey Library District tower located at the site. The library-themed architecture represents an abstraction of books lining a shelf and a three-level pavilion overlooking the park.

Onni Group is making a splash in the neighbourhood with The Yards, The Local and The Garrison condo projects. "We felt the location was actually quite ideal for growth downtown and affordability." says Onni sales manager Sue Young. "That was the reason that we chose the site and we invested quite a bit into it, because we have four towers all in all when it's completed."

"With the neighbourhood improvements there are plans already in place. Loblaw's right across the street from our site has already initiated their store and some retailers like Joe Fresh and some smaller retail stores," says Young.

Making a splash in the neighbourhood

"We felt the location was actually quite ideal for growth downtown and affordability."

Sue Young, Onni sales manager

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1 Yorkville. CONTRIBUTED

Meet the condo

- **What.** 1 Yorkville
- **Builder.** Bazis and Plaza
- **Location.** 1 Yorkville Ave.
- **Website.** 1yorkville.ca
- **Pricing.** From mid $300s to over $2M
- **Sizes.** From 475 to 2,000 sq. ft.
- **Suites.** One bedroom, one bedroom plus den, two bedroom, two bedroom plus den and three bedroom
- **Occupancy.** Fall-winter 2018

The project overview

Bazis' newest exclusive condominium will rise above fully-restored Yorkville Village buildings that were built in the 1860s. The historical façades and structure of the 19th century buildings will house the condo's retail offerings.

Location and transit

The building is located at the intersection of the Bloor and Yonge TTC subway lines and has access to the underground PATH system. Motorists are a short drive from the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway.

In the neighbourhood

Yorkville is famous for its Mink Mile and upscale restaurants. Residents will enjoy world-class shopping, dining and entertainment. This walkable location will include a 25-foot-wide pedestrian walkway that will connect Cumberland Avenue to Yorkville Avenue.

Building amenities

A three-floor amenity space will include party rooms with fully-equipped kitchens, a multimedia room and cinema. Two sun decks, outdoor pool and hot tub. Exercise level features a fitness gallery and spa area, plunge pools, steam room, sauna and dance studio.

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National Home Show

Get free reno advice

BRYAN TUCKEY
President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) can be found at twitter.com/bildgta, facebook.com/bildgta, and bildblogs.ca.

The National Home Show is two weeks away and the anticipation is building as advertisements have begun to appear on television, radio and newspapers across the GTA. Best of all, you can hear people talking about it and feel the excitement in the air.

The show opens on March 14 at the Direct Energy Centre at Exhibition Place. More than 200,000 people are expected to attend over the 10-day run and BILD will be well-represented at our feature exhibit, Destination Renovation.

A Home Show staple for many years, Destination Renovation offers homeowners interested in renovations an opportunity to sit down and consult with a professional RenoMark renovator free of charge.

These renovators are all members of BILD, as well as the national RenoMark program. They have volunteered their time to help answer homeowners' questions about their home renovation projects and educate them about the benefits of hiring a professional. Feel free to bring photos, drawings or blueprints and don't be afraid to ask questions.

Whether you are thinking about renovating or just curious to learn more about the process, head over to booth 1916 right under the rotating RenoMark logo. You can also visit renomark.ca to learn more about professional renovation. The site's main feature is a searchable database that allows you to find a RenoMark contractor in your area.

To learn more about the National Home Show, visit nationalhomeshow.com. Those who purchase their tickets online will save $3 off regular admission.

Don't be shy; say hello if you see me there. It would be great to meet some of my readers.

What's hot on the condo market

DUNCAN MCALLISTER

1. Etobicoke

Sales Event: Final release, Evolution condos at Dundas and Islington in Etobicoke. March 8 from 12 to 6 p.m. Visit the sales centre at 5101 Dundas St. W.

CALL 416-747-9691 OR VISIT EVOLUTIONCONDOS.CA

2. Front Street

International Home and Garden Show: Accessorize your condo. March 6 to 9 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, 255 Front St. W.

CONTACT: CALL 416-512-1305 OR VISIT VISIT INTERNATIONALHOMEANDGARDENSHOW.CA

3. Downtown

Open House: Merchandise Lofts in the downtown Church-Yonge corridor. One plus one bedrooms, one bathroom. Go to 155 Dalhousie St., March 8 from 2 to 4 p.m.

CONTACT: CALL 416-481-6137

4. U of T

Green roof gurus panel: Getting green roofs right. Head over to the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto, 230 College St., March 6 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

CONTACT: VISIT DANIELS.UTORONTO.CA

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Bling on summer in the backyard

DIY. For a deluxe take on outdoor living, turn a gazebo into a media room or amp up your grilling style

Vanilla Ice may have a cool name, but the rock-star-turned-home-improvement guru knows how to heat up a backyard. With a passion for modern features and luxurious amenities, Ice doesn't just renovate — he adds style and swagger.

With spring around the corner, consider spicing up your own backyard to make it worthy of its own music video.

Pimp out the gazebo

Gazebos provide a refuge out of the sun and a relaxing place for friends and family to kick back. To take the traditional gazebo to the next level, install a projector to the ceiling and hang a screen at the back to enjoy late night movies or the big game. Once a television cable or DVD player is attached, invite the neighbours over for an extravagant block party.

The Vanilla Ice Project

- For more home renovation ideas, catch The Vanilla Ice Project Tuesdays at 10 p.m. ET/PT on DIY Network Canada.

Step up your grilling game

Kick that old barbecue to the curb and replace it with a new grill that features more burners, an infrared rotisserie burner and night lights for evening cooking. To spend less time inside and more time cooking with friends, recreate an entire outdoor kitchen with a mini-fridge, sink, prep area, and stove. Outdoor kitchens can be entirely customized or bought in pieces, making them easy to fit in virtually any space.

Raise the bar

For when a pool just isn't enough to beat the heat, a swim-up bar can keep the backyard cool. Swim-up bars are no longer just for resorts and are becoming more popular in residential pools. Not only do they have a vacation feel, they're practical for entertaining guests or just taking a break from pool sports. When planning the design, consider seating, sun angles, and storage for popular drink favourites and cups.

Light my fire

Don't stop enjoying the outdoors because of fall weather. An outdoor fireplace can add warmth and light to dark, chilly evenings. While smaller, temporary fireplaces are great for flexibility, built in brick or stone fireplaces provide first-class elegance. They're great for intimate evenings together or a classic camp fire singalong. Check with local authorities before beginning, as some areas prohibit decorative fires.

Outdoor kitchens can be customized to fit almost any space. ISTOCK

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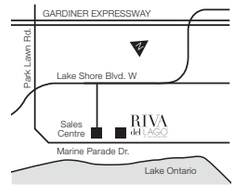

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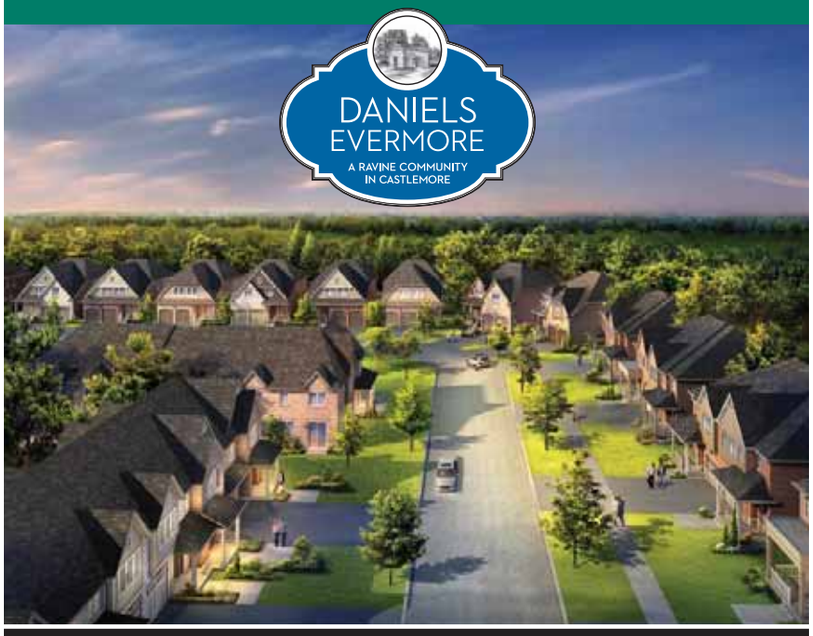
COMING THIS SPRING TO CASTLEMORE IN BRAMPTON



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Fab visions for vacay finds

Everyone loves to bring back souvenirs from a holiday. Fridge magnets, coffee mugs, tea towels, carved masks and seashells are just a few of the popular items that keep vacation memories alive. Here's what to look for when you're away, and a few ideas to ensure your mementos are displayed to their best advantage once you get them home

DESIGN CENTRE
Karl Lohnes
home@metronews.ca

Rules for travel collecting

1. Before purchasing an item to display in your home, ask yourself if it will fit nicely with your home's decor. A carved African mask would make a great display for bohemian-styled decor but could look out of place in a country-themed room.
2. Keep the entire collection together. Grouping has a bigger impact and creates a strong focal point. Double the impact by placing your display in front of a mirror.
3. Large collections can be divided and grouped by colour or theme to help make a stronger statement.
4. Narrow floating shelves in a hallway or a shelf installed just above a door entrance are great spots to display your collections without taking up valuable tabletop space.
5. Shadow-boxing small items gives them a museum quality, keeps collections tidy and creates unusual wall art.

ISTOCK

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A grouping of masks can create a statement when hung on the right wall. Keep the collection tightly spaced and match it to your decor through colour or theme. A great place to create a display is on a hallway end wall or in a powder room. Paint the display wall a dramatic colour like rust, teal or grey to create a backdrop that will show off your collection.

Hang a piece of decorative fabric or rug behind a bed to create an instant headboard. Kilim or flat weave carpets can be used as sturdy upholstery for poufs and ottomans. Rugs 3x4 feet or smaller look very special when framed and hung on the wall.

ISTOCK

CONTRIBUTED

Vintage tea towels make great artwork for the kitchen when steamed and pressed behind glass. They can also make unique pillows for a kitchen banquette.

Purchase mugs in themed sets. Provincial flowers, city map scenes, animals or flags are options easily found in many tourist haunts. Use a mug tree or a series of shallow wall shelves to show off your curated collection. London Underground Map ceramic mug set of four, 13 pounds, ltmuseumshop.co.uk.

CONTRIBUTED

ISTOCK

Shadow-box or frame paper souvenirs to show them off. I like to enlarge and laser-print a favourite postcard to create unique art for the wall, then keep the original safe in an album.

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Annuals are your friend for instant hit of colour

Don't try to do everything the first year. Mulching will keep the weeds down. Composting will improve the soil. Bringing in some annuals for window boxes, hanging baskets or containers will provide instant colour. "Nothing gives you as much impact in a garden as planting

annuals," said Josh Kane, president and head designer at Kane Landscapes Inc. in Sterling, Va.

Get to the root of problem areas before you plant

Anticipate. Avoid planting trees or shrubs near sewer or water lines, to prevent root damage. Study the property for restrictions that could prevent expansions or additions. "A lot of people might want to build a big outdoor room or pool and find they can't do it because of an easement on the property," Kane said.

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What to the yard with your

It takes more than pink flamingoes to make a new yard your own

"There's no problem with asking owners for a list of landscape items and for an explanation about the plantings. Usually, the owners are more than happy to give you a list. In fact, if they know the purchasers are interested, that will make for good feelings on both sides." Real estate agent Shirley French

New property owners temporarily added whimsical yard art to the entry while moving into a house in Langley, Wash. DEAN FOSDICK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New house, new garden. Here are tips for weeding out landscaping surprises

North Americans are a restless bunch. They change locations with a frequency that would tire a migrating songbird.

But there is more to moving day than unpacking boxes; there's also learning to care for that garden inherited with the new home.

If you were thinking ahead, you asked for an inventory of the plants and accessories that came with the house.

"There's no problem with asking owners for a list of landscape items and for an explanation about the plantings," said Shirley French, an agent with the Woodstock, Va., office of Funkhouser Real Estate Group. "Usually, the owners are more than happy to give you a list. In fact, if they know the purchasers are interested, that will make for good feelings on both sides."

Gardening priorities are determined mostly by the seasons. You won't be mowing the lawn in February, al-

do with that came new home

though you might be combing the seed catalogues.

But where to start with a newly purchased property?

Michael Becker, president of Estate Gardeners Inc. in Omaha, Neb., suggests that putting safety first.

"Check out the dangers," said Becker, a spokesman for Planet, the Professional Landcare Network, which certifies green industry professionals. "Are the retaining walls stable? Are any trees leaning or diseased with dead branches?

"Assess the hardscape," Becker said. "Is anything heaving, creating tripping hazards? Examine the drainage around the house. More often than not, it isn't correct and may be damaging the structure. Bring in some professionals to help sort things out."

As for plantings, be patient with the perennials.

"Go through the seasonal changes," Becker said. "Learn what things look like in your yard. Determine if it's esthetically what you want, or if it's so high-maintenance you won't have the time to care for it. Most perennials need pruning and deadheading."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

No-one likes a frosty reception

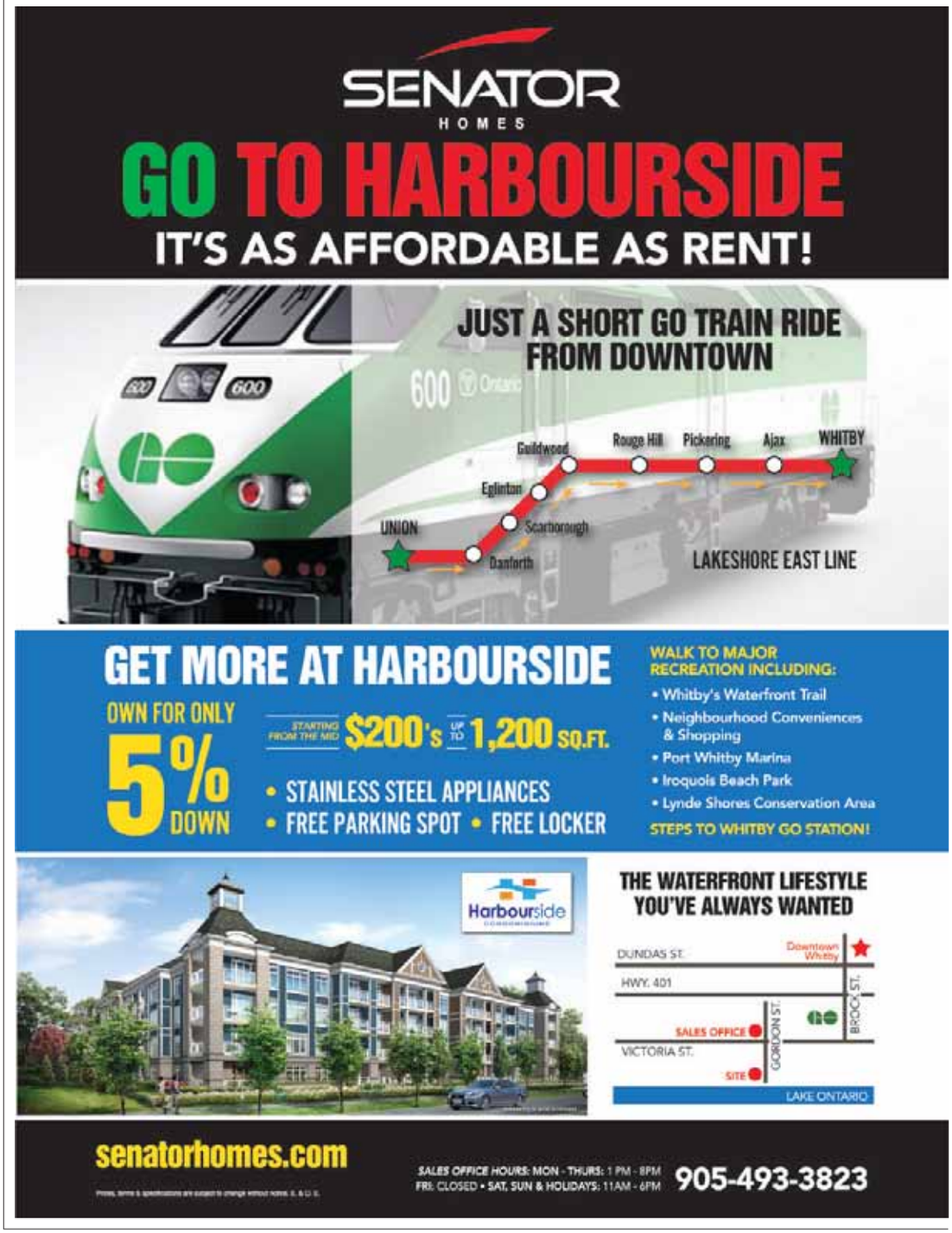
Make note of the average frost dates. Do soil tests. Map the yard for sun and shade. "If you live in the city and all you have is a porch or a patio to work with, where is all that water going to go that you'll be putting on plants?" asked Kane.

"Also, where do you get the water? You'll have to figure out how to care for everything."

Turning on the waterworks

"Look for care instructions when dealing with special features," Kane said. "A lot of people get put off or are scared of things like koi ponds, pools and fountains that require startups, maintenance and attention during the seasons."

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES FILE



metro
MARCH BREAK
Thursday, March 6, 2014

The great indoors

Ideas. There are plenty of activities without having to go outside to keep the kids occupied

ASTRID VAN DEN BROEK
For Metro

Looking to spend a little time inside this March break?

We get it — many of us have just about had it with winter. If so, steal some of these indoor ideas for the weeklong break.

Have a PJ day

Give your kids a day off, so to speak. Let them stay in their pyjamas all day, but make sure you line up some fun activities — think a round of Monopoly, a game of chess, a movie with popcorn and order something like Peekapak, an activity kit that combines storytelling and crafting.

Let the kids stay in their pyjamas for the day and line up some fun activities. ALENA OZEROVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Go swimming

Who says indoors has to be at home? Use this time to look for local pools that might be open for family or recreational swims and enjoy getting those swimsuits on without having to layer on sunscreen, too.

Play indoors

Get your kids moving inside the house. "What we do is we will have a dance competition like American Idol and we all judge competitors," says Tracie Wagman, the Toronto-based publisher of Help! We've Got Kids. "We do napkin tag but we'll run around the house and try and take a cloth and touch the other person like tag. Or we'll do something like obstacle courses."

Take in a show

"Another thing I love to do, and for not very much money, is go see a theatre show with my kids," Wagman said. "There are many shows playing in local theatres and if it's a kid's show, your kids can be loud and interact with the actors."

Head to camp

Wagman notes that almost every extracurricular activity your child takes part in is likely a camp theme during the break — either daylong of half-day options. "And most of the YMCAs and places like that will have programs with something to do during the break.

Chess is a fun and educational indoor activity. ALBINA GLISIC/SHUTTERSTOCK

Visit a pool during the March break. ANTON BALAZH/SHUTTERSTOCK

Find local activities

Are you looking to find something to do near you? Try these websites:

- helpwevegotkids.com: This national site connects you with activities of all sorts — from dance to sports and more to check out over the March break.
- ymca.ca: This site lets you search for a YMCA near you to see if they have local programs available over the break.

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Travel. Let the kids be involved

The Ontario Science Centre hosts Sesame Street Presents The Body March 8-16. ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE PHOTO

Learn more about the body

Sesame Street Presents The Body — An interactive exhibit about the human body. Activities include counting organs with The Count and learning about digestion with Oscar the Grouch. At the Ontario Science Centre. For more, visit ontariosciencecentre.ca or call 416-696-1000.

Wizard World — This year's featured entertainment is the Xtreme Wild show, featuring lions, wolves, and baboons from the Bowmanville Zoo. Runs March 9-16. For more, visit wizardworld.ca or call 416-585-9263.

Katie Herrick Bugbee, senior managing editor and resident global parenting expert of care.com, offers these tips for travelling with children during March break.

Fill your carry-ons. If flying, pack snacks, books, activities and download movies onto your tablet. Make sure you have an outlet adapter to fit more than one set of headphones, too. Give kids their own backpacks so you don't get stuck lugging it all and they can feel more "responsible" and grown-up.

If driving, plan your route with pit stops, which may include restaurants that feature play zones. Add an extra hour for each break to let the kids run around and get their energy out. They may sleep for longer stretches thanks to full bellies and tired bodies.

Don't forget items to help get you through the night. If you use sound machines, bring one or download an app to help the kids sleep. We often bring our "OK to Get Up" clock that lights up at 6:30. Putting this in the kids' room ensures they won't bounce out of bed, excited for holiday, at 5 a.m.

Allow the kids to get involved when travelling. GORILLAIMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Take the opportunity to educate. Pre-plan some fun lessons about wherever you are travelling. Older kids can research the destination on their own, and in no time, you may have your itinerary planned with some very eager attendees.

Plan some time just for the parents. Consider bringing a favourite babysitter with you. If you are visiting family, ask them to take the kids for a night. Or find a sitter for when you are away with a site like care.com.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Visit the Shops At Don Mills from March 10-14 for a variety of activities. SHOPS AT DON MILLS PHOTO

Visit Shops at Don Mills

Shops At Don Mills — Variety of fun-filled family activities, including ice skating, pizza parties, magic shows and children's yoga. Runs March 10-14. For more, visit shopsatdonmills.ca or call 416-447-6087, ext. 243.

Sugarbush Maple Syrup Festival — Features demonstrations, wagon rides, crafts, maple syrup samples and more. Until April 6. At Kortright Centre for Conservation and Bruce's Mill Conservation Area. For more, visit maplesyrupfest.com.

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11am, 12pm and 1pm, 30 min visits.

Meet DORA from DORA The Explorer
LIVE playing at The Randolph Theatre.
10am, 12pm and 2pm, 30 min visits.

MONDAY MARCH 10 – FRIDAY MARCH 14
5 days of Frozen* Fun!
Celebrating the in-home release of Disney's Frozen*, complete Anna, Elsa and Olaf activity sheets and enter for a chance to win a Blu-ray copy of Disney's Frozen*.
Available on Digital HD and Blu-ray Combo Pack™ March 18, 2014.
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TUESDAY MARCH 11 – FRIDAY MARCH 14
4 days of Engineering Fun!
Design your very own tower of power! Learn how super structures are constructed and put your building knowledge to the test. Discover all the cool ways engineers influence the world around us with fun activities designed by the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers in celebration of National Engineering Month. 10am–3pm
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Events subject to change without notice. Edgewalk is seasonal and subject to weather conditions. *Maximum of 2 people 18-64 years old.

Find a local sugar bush and learn about how maple syrup is made. SIANC/SHUTTERSTOCK

Embrace the winter with outdoor activities

ASTRID VAN DEN BROEK
For Metro

Skiing is fun and healthy for the entire family. GORILLAIMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Do you love the outdoors? March break week is a great time to spend outside with the kids.

Here are five ideas to keep in mind for the big school break.

1 Head for the hills: "You can go to one of those city ski areas — every city has one and you can do just a family pass and go skiing," says Tracie Wagman, the Toronto-based publisher of Help! We've Got Kids. "It's really fun to do as a family and if you're going to have winter, you might as well enjoy it."

2 Or other outdoor activities: How about trying your hand (or, err, feet) at snowshoeing by renting some snowshoes. Or go tobogganing or skating. "These are all easy to do and it's all ages as well," Wagman said. "People tend to forget that there are still lots of skating rinks and lots of hills and you don't need to do anything but bring your gear."

3 Head to the zoo: Is there a zoo in your city? Take in the animals while they are awake and perky rather than slow and sleepy as you tend to see them in the summer. Bonus: It's likely less busy than on those sunny, summer days.

4 Find some maple syrup: Late winter and early spring is prime maple syrup time so look for a local sugar bush near you. Along with watching the syrup be made, many offer other activities including pancake breakfasts, walks through the bush, syrup tastings, wagon rides and more.

5 Get crafty outdoors: Why not nurture your child's creative side with some outdoor crafts? Think coloured water in spray bottles to let your child transform your white backyard into a bright canvas. Or use the freezing temperatures to your advantage and fill balloons or milk cartons with water to freeze and create outdoor ice sculptures or lanterns.

Outdoor inspiration

Do you need more inspiration? Check out these online resources.

- todaysparent.com: This national magazine has a list of 50 essential activities to try during winter.
- spoonful.com: This online parenting site offers a whole new list of creative outdoor crafts.

4 SPORTS

Drama on deadline day

GETTY IMAGES

Martin St. Louis wanted out of Tampa Bay, so Steve Yzerman and the Lightning granted him his wish.

In what could turn out to be the biggest trade ever influenced by the Olympics, St. Louis was dealt to the New York Rangers for **Ryan Callahan**, a first-round pick in the 2015 draft and a conditional second-rounder this year.

St. Louis asked for a trade after Yzerman, who was Team Canada's executive director, left him off the initial 25-man roster for Sochi. St. Louis replaced the injured Steven Stamkos and won a gold medal, but bitterness remained.

Marian Gaborik
GETTY IMAGES

The Columbus Blue Jackets send **F Marian Gaborik** to the Los Angeles Kings for **F Matt Frattin** and two conditional picks.

Marcel Goc
GETTY IMAGES

The Pittsburgh Penguins acquire **F Marcel Goc** from the Florida Panthers for a third-round pick and a fifth-round pick in the 2015 draft and **F Lee Stempniak** from the Calgary Flames in exchange for a 2014 third-round pick.

The Canadiens acquired **F Thomas Vanek** from the New York Islanders for **F Sebastien Collberg** and a conditional second-round pick in the 2014 NHL draft. Vanek, seen as the best rental available, and a conditional fifth-round pick head to Montreal.

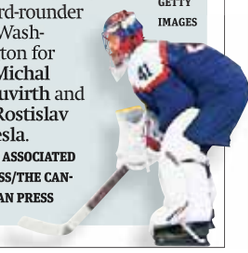
GETTY IMAGES

The Florida Panthers send **G Tim Thomas** to the Dallas Stars for **G Dan Ellis**.

GETTY IMAGES

Buffalo sends **G Jaroslav Halak** and a 2015 third-rounder to Washington for **G Michal Neuvirth** and **D Rostislav Klesla**.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/THE CANADIAN PRESS


GETTY IMAGES

Prices too high for Leafs' Nonis

Trade deadline. Toronto general manager keeps roster intact for playoff push

The Toronto Maple Leafs stood pat Wednesday, deciding that the cost to make a move on trade deadline day was too much.

"We would have been hurting ourselves long-term and we weren't prepared to do that," Dave Nonis, Toronto's general manager, told reporters.

Nonis, who said he made plenty of calls to test the waters, said the asking prices were high and the talent on offer limited. The sense he got was there might be more movement come the summer.

"There wasn't a lot available in general," he said. "I think deals that changed the look of your team seemed to happen at the draft."

Nonis acknowledged that his team had been up and down, putting the onus on the Leafs to return to their winning ways before the Olympic break.

"If we do, we should be fine. And if we don't, then we're going to have some difficulties," he said. "But it's not a bad team. I think we've got a good core group. We're very young still." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Interest but no movement

"Morgan Rielly's easy to move today. But it doesn't makes sense to us."

Leafs GM Dave Nonis saying he did get trade inquiries, pointing to younger players like rookie defenceman Morgan Rielly

Leafs get off the skids

Tyler Bozak scored on a penalty shot and then got the winning goal 1:51 into overtime to lift the Toronto Maple Leafs to a 3-2 win over the Rangers on Wednesday night, spoiling Martin St. Louis' New York debut.

- Bozak slammed a loose puck past Henrik Lundqvist to snap the Leafs' three-game losing streak and stretch New York's skid to three. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leafs centre Tyler Bozak celebrates Wednesday's overtime winner in Manhattan. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toronto FC waives midfielder Lambe to trim salary cap

MLS. Bermuda international fell in the Reds' depth chart after recent acquisitions

Toronto FC has waived midfielder Reggie Lambe.

The 23-year-old Bermuda international joined the MLS team in December 2011, brought on board by then director of player development Paul Mariner.

He went on to make 66 appearances in all competitions for Toronto, registering five goals and four assists.

At his best, Lambe offered some cut and thrust from the flank. But he was more miss than hit, ultimately falling down the midfield ladder in a roster featuring Michael Bradley, Dwayne De Rosario, Jonathan Osorio, Alvaro Rey, Kyle Bekker and Brazil's Jackson.

In the end he was released to make Toronto's salary numbers work. He was one of the 20 players whose pay counted against the salary cap. He was not eligible for the supplemental roster — players occupying roster spots 21-30 who do not count against the cap.

Lambe's salary was listed at $70,000 US last season.

"Enjoyed my time at Toronto sad to leave the club wish the lads the best this season," Lambe tweeted.

Lambe also spent time with England's Ipswich Town and Bristol Rovers.

He has played 12 times for Bermuda with four goals.

Lambe was part of Toronto's 2012 Amway Canadian Championship winner, scoring the winning goal against the Vancouver Whitecaps in the second leg of the final.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Defoe sits

Toronto FC striker Jermain Defoe did not make it off the bench for England in a 1-0 victory over Denmark on Wednesday.

- An appearance would have been Defoe's 56th England cap. He is slated to fly to Canada next to join his new MLS team.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This girl's got game

Women's Olympic team goaltender Shannon Szabados stares down the Edmonton Oilers' Ryan Jones as she takes part in the Oilers' practice on Wednesday. Szabados was called into action while the Oilers waited for Viktor Fasth to arrive after a trade with Anaheim. Szabados was invited to practice after fans on Twitter had urged the team to put her on the roster as backup in Tuesday night's game. A goalie from the University of Alberta was chosen instead, but Szabados said she was thrilled to take part in practice.

JASON FRANZEN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB

Morrow roughed up by Pirates

Brandon Morrow allowed five runs and six hits over three innings in the Toronto Blue Jays' 6-4 loss Wednesday to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Morrow was making his second appearance since a season-ending forearm injury last May. On Feb. 28, the right-hander gave up two hits and one run in two relief innings.

Brandon Morrow
GETTY IMAGES

"The important thing, I felt good again," Morrow said. "Forearm is feeling really good. I felt loose again. I felt good with my breaking stuff. Fastball command kind of put me in a hole a couple times."

Morrow struck out two, walked one, hit a batter and threw a wild pitch.

Travis Snider had a first-inning RBI single and a two-run homer in the third off Morrow.

Edwin Encarnacion had a two-run double for the Blue Jays. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

‘It carries a lot of purpose’

Paralympics. Gold-medal winning curler Sonja Gaudet named flag-bearer for Team Canada in Sochi

Sonja Gaudet will carry Canada’s flag at the opening ceremony of the Sochi Paralympics.

Whether the most decorated wheelchair curler in history sticks around for the rest of the show is still up in the air.

Gaudet was announced as Canada’s flag-bearer on Wednesday and will lead her country’s delegation into Fisht Stadium on Friday night.

But with the festivities expected to go late into the evening and the curling team’s first game set for the following morning, Gaudet might have to duck out early.

“We do have some strategies,” said Gaudet. “Our priority is to be ready for Game 1. It’s a big game for us and we’re certainly going to make sure that we are (ready). (Carrying the flag is) just going to give us a little more purpose and create a really positive atmosphere to compete in.”

The 47-year-old from North Vancouver, B.C., who won gold medals at both the 2006 and 2010 Paralympics said she was overwhelmed with emotion when told that she would lead the Canadian contingent.

“It carries a lot of purpose for me,” said Gaudet, who also has three wheelchair curling world championships to her name. “Of course we’re here to compete as athletes with a physical disability at the highest level — that’s what the Paralympic Games are.

“(But) it sends a big global message as well about looking past the wheelchair, looking past the visual impairment, looking past the missing limb and really focusing on the person and focusing on what’s there.

“We don’t want people to see what they see when they first see us. We want them to see the athlete, the person, and not notice what’s missing.”

Gaudet, who suffered a spinal cord injury after falling from a horse, also acknowledged that she wouldn’t have been named flag-bearer if it wasn’t for her curling teammates.

“I have a lot of emotions going through my mind right now,” she said. “Totally honoured to have this very prestigious position. I can’t wait to lead my fellow Paralympic athletes into the opening ceremonies. Although I might be physically carrying the flag, I’m honoured that my team is going to be up there with me.”

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Back to site of success

“We know a little bit what to expect at the venue so we’re in a really good place.”

Sonja Gaudet whose three world championships include last year’s in Sochi.

Sonja Gaudet poses for a Canadian Olympic Committee portrait in Vancouver. The curler won gold for Canada at the 2010 and 2006 Paralympic Games. JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES

Sochi 2014

Russia fires men’s hockey coach

Russia ice hockey coach Zinetula Bilyaletdinov is leaving his job after the home team’s disappointing quarterfinals exit at the Sochi Olympics.

Russia lost 3-1 to Finland to miss out on an Olympic medal which was among the nation’s top priorities at the Sochi Games. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Stamkos nears return to Bolts

Lightning forward Steven Stamkos plans to return to the Tampa Bay lineup Thursday, four months after breaking his right leg.

Stamkos, who was forced to miss the Olympics and the Lightning’s past 45 games, tweeted Wednesday morning that he’ll play against Buffalo on Thursday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

NFL. Bills in Toronto series going on hiatus

The Buffalo Bills won’t be coming north this season.

The NFL club and Rogers Communications announced Wednesday they’ve put the beleaguered Bills Toronto Series — which features Buffalo playing games at Rogers Centre — on hold for at least a year. That means the team will play eight home games in Orchard Park, N.Y., for the first time since 2007.

“The plan is to postpone it for one year, regroup and determine what’s the next best step,” said Keith Pelley, the president of Rogers Communications’ media division. “It’s not nullified right now, we have an agreement in place.

“Anything is possible but that’s not the plan. The plan is to take a step back and say, ‘OK, the series is having some challenges, the NFL is still big in Toronto, it’s still important to the Bills so what’s the best way to move forward?”’

The decision comes a little more than a year after the Bills and Rogers agreed to renew the series for five years, though 2017.

A series-low gathering of 38,969 watched the Atlanta Falcons nip Buffalo 34-31 in overtime Dec. 1 at Rogers Centre.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Price not quite right?

$99

Tickets prices initially averaging over $180 each in Toronto, compared to roughly $51 US at Orchard Park, and struggling Bills teams combined to make the series a tough sell. Tickets were reduced to roughly an average of $99 but even that didn’t result in a sellout last year.

Thursday, March 6, 2014

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metro

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Family matters will take up most of your time today but don't think that means you cannot have fun. Loved ones are hoping you will suggest a trip you can all enjoy together.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You know what you want and you know how and where to get it, so all you have to do now is reach out your hand and take it. Sounds easy, doesn't it? Well that's because it is. Make things happen!

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Good news about your finances is on its way and by the end of the week you will be wondering why and how you allowed yourself to get so worked up about a simple thing like money. Treat yourself — you deserve it.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You have been a bit to cautious of late but now that Jupiter is moving in your favour again you will find the confidence to take a few risks. If you have not done it already, you should be planning your next adventure.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You will no doubt wonder what the catch is when someone in a position of authority offers you something you have long desired, but there is no need to be suspicious.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You want to get things done, but because not everyone is as motivated as you it may take effort to get others to help you. No, you can't go it alone. There is too much to do.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You will win over even the most reluctant of people today. Create a vision of what it is you intend to achieve and let them see that they can share in the spoils, but they have got to back you — now.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Don't give in today, especially with co-workers who will take advantage of you if you don't stand up for yourself. You may want to help but you should not be doing everything.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Some people seem to be under the impression that they can snap their fingers and you will come running. But with Jupiter, your ruler, on great form today they are in for a rude awakening.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You've got a nagging feeling that you could have done more to make a success of a relationship. Maybe you're right but that was then and this is now. Stop looking back.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Jupiter moves in your favour today, making it easy to break free of habits that are holding you back. Remember: the best way to get rid of a habit is to replace it with a better one that challenges you.

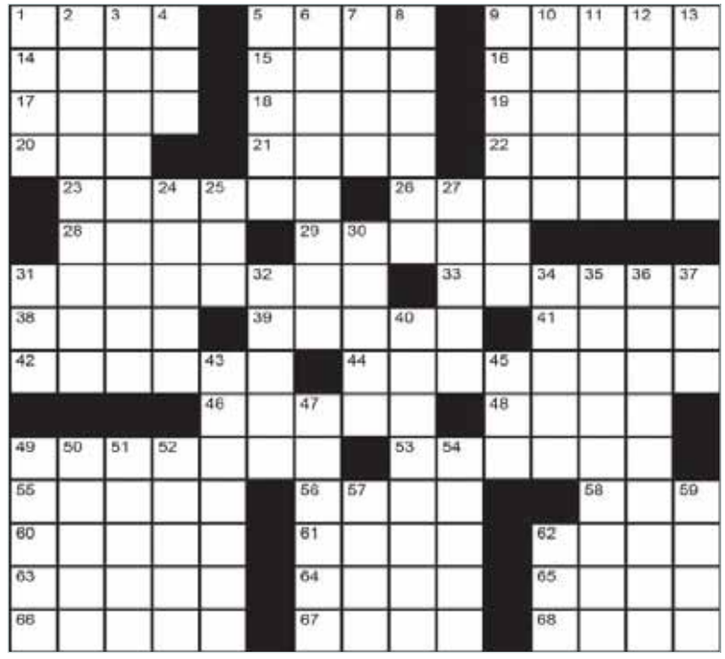
♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will get a burst of energy today, enabling you to finish something you started a long time ago. Some people believe that Pisceans are lazy. It's time to prove them wrong.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

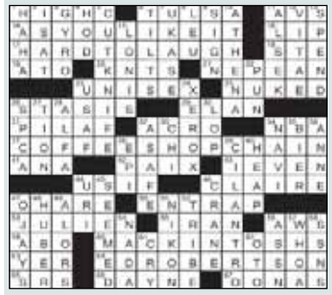
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. High hairstyle
5. Nursemaid
9. Zestfulness
14. Earth's crust's upper layer
15. Actor's dialogue
16. Staked, in poker
17. Stare
18. Facial result
19. Window's sun blocker
20. Alphabetical trio
21. Half of a Basque court game
22. Mouthwash-using step
23. Bellowing beast
26. Social site
28. Actress, Candace Cameron __
29. Music's Mr. Shaw
31. A car in Britney Spears' "Work B**ch!"
33. TV type
38. Certain cuckoos
39. "Don't __ __ what you know is true." - INXS
41. Tibia's locale
42. __ comedy
44. Northeastern Ontario community, __ Lake
46. Daniel Day-__
48. Libertine
49. Historic legal building in Toronto, __ Hall
53. Lays eggs, salmon-style
55. Wallet items
56. Certain canal
58. Calder Cup sports org.
60. Marvin Gaye duettist Ms. Terrell
61. Orchestra instrument
62. Ms. Gardner's
63. "Sounds like _ __!"
64. Fails to be
65. Delicate
66. __ to try (Eager)
67. More or __
68. Aardvark snacks

Down
1. Humour book: _._. __ Eh?: How Canada Secretly Controls the United States and Why That's OK
2. Loonies, dimes, etc.
3. Nova Scotia university
4. Rosemary Clooney's "This __ House"
5. Pond stuff
6. National Basketball League of Canada team, Saint John __ __
7. Buffalo sort
8. Princess Diana's affair-ee, Captain James __
9. "In Your Eyes" by Peter Who?
10. Not-in-use candle's status
11. Time on the job
12. Strained
13. More strange
24. Usurp
25. "The Lorax" (2012) character, The Once-__
27. Windshield __
30. __-Tikki-Tavi
31. Pas' wives
32. Oohed and __
34. "It must be _ __ news day."
35. Saskatchewan's southwest town
36. Prospecting passageway: 2 wds.
37. Also
40. Tom Cruise's 'Impossible' undertakings
43. Leonard Cohen's "__ Time"
45. Isthmus of __ (Malay Peninsula part)
47. Beetle sort
49. Grouping that's the sum of VII + I
50. Like dish-washing water
51. Manitoba town with Icelandic heritage
52. "Come __, __..." (Hurry ...or give it a break already)
54. Hides
57. The Parachute Club hit: "__ Up"
59. Itemized things, for short
62. Noted botanist Mr. Gray

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

	5			9	4		7	
6								
				6	8		2	3
8		2		4		1		
			6		5			
		6		7		2		9
7	1		9	8				
								2
	8		1	3			5	

Yesterday's Sudoku

5	3	4	2	9	1	7	6	8
7	9	1	8	6	5	2	4	3
8	2	6	3	4	7	1	5	9
4	8	9	7	2	6	5	3	1
2	7	5	1	3	9	6	8	4
1	6	3	4	5	8	9	2	7
6	5	8	9	7	3	4	1	2
3	4	7	6	1	2	8	9	5
9	1	2	5	8	4	3	7	6

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